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THE
LEADERS OF PUBLIC OPINION
IN
IRELAND.

“The breath of liberty, like the word of the holy man, will not die with the prophet, but will survive him.”—GRATTAN.

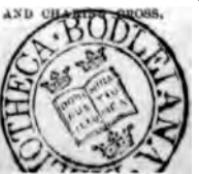


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THE
LEADERS OF PUBLIC OPINION
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IRELAND.

INTRODUCTION.

We usually find in diseased and undeveloped nations that history resolves itself into biography. The national life radiates from a single individual. The historian has but to record the vicissitudes of his fortunes, the fluctuations of his opinions, and the peculiarities of his temperament.

This truth has been strikingly illustrated in Ireland. In the earlier portions of Irish history our attention is almost exclusively concentrated upon a succession of warrior-chiefs, who represented in turn the principle of nationality, who carried on the hereditary war against England with great courage and great ferocity, and sometimes with great ability; but who invariably succumbed at last beneath the discipline and the numbers of

their opponents. At last the sword of Ireland was broken at the Boyne. The true principles of constitutional monarchy which were established in England by the Revolution, began to be appreciated by a few of the higher intellects in Ireland. The possibility of reconciling nationality with loyalty was perceived. The reign of public opinion was inaugurated.

This reign, however, did not rise from any spontaneous movement among the people. It was simply the work of a few transcendent intellects, and reflected in all its phases their opinions, and even their characters. Under Swift public opinion first acquired a definite form and an imposing influence. Under Flood it penetrated into the debates of Parliament. Under Grattan it triumphed in 1782; it succumbed in 1800; it assumed a more expansive and catholic character. Under O'Connell its dominion became still wider, but its spirit more narrow. It became democratical, and at the same time sectarian, and on his death the political was almost absorbed in the religious element.

In the following biographies I have endeavoured to trace the progress, the triumphs, and the decline of this public opinion. I have confined myself chiefly to the more significant facts, and have omitted both minor details and some

considerations which, though of vital importance to the country, are not directly connected with our main subject.

The condition of Ireland suggests two great questions to the observer. The first is that stated long ago by Bishop Berkeley: How it is that a country with so many natural resources should be always the poorest in Europe,—its people trembling continually on the verge of starvation, and its position so obviously different from that for which Providence designed it? The second question is: To what causes we are to ascribe the present disorganised state of public opinion, the strange combination of extreme liberal politics with strong sympathies for foreign despotisms, the intense aversion to everything English manifested by the mass of the people? It is with the second of these questions alone that we are concerned.

The time is well suited for such an investigation. Formerly to write a history of the national feeling in Ireland was necessarily to advocate one existing party in opposition to another, and, therefore, to elicit the distorting influences of controversy. All this, however, has now past. We have an English party among us, and an Italian party; but we look in vain for an Irish party. It is hard to say whether those are further removed from the traditions of nationality who repudiate all

national sentiments as Irishmen, or those who would make their country simply the weapon of their church, and sacrifice every principle of liberalism upon the altar. Amid the sectarian virulence that distracts and dominates over Ireland in the present, it may be permitted to recall the memories of her past, and to scatter these few flowers upon the sepulchres of her dead.

JONATHAN SWIFT.

JONATHAN SWIFT was born at Dublin in the year 1667. His father (who had died a few months before) had been steward of the King's Inn's Society. His mother was an English lady of a Leicestershire family, remarkable for the strictness of her religious views, and for the energy and activity of her character. At the early age of six, Swift was sent to a school at Kilkenny, where he remained till he was fourteen, when he entered the University of Dublin. His position then became one of the most painful that can be conceived. At an age when pecuniary restraints are especially galling, he found himself subject to two of the greatest curses of life: the curse of poverty, and the curse of dependence. His sole means of subsistence were the remittances of his uncle Godwin, and those remittances, owing to the poverty—or as Swift believed, the miserly disposition—of his uncle, were doled out in the most niggardly manner. He found it impossible to maintain the position of a gentleman. He was precluded from all the luxuries, and could with

difficulty procure the necessaries of life. Notwithstanding the extreme frugality with which he managed his slender resources, he was on one occasion left absolutely destitute, and was relieved only by the unexpected arrival of a present from a cousin, who was a merchant at Lisbon. The conduct of a young man under such circumstances often furnishes no obscure intimation of the prevailing character of his after-life. Goldsmith, when struggling with extreme poverty at the University, lived in the most reckless enjoyment, spending what money he had with profuse generosity, disregarding as far as possible the studies of his course, and only employing his fine talents in writing street-ballads, which he sold to supply his more pressing wants. Johnson, in a similar position, grew morose, and turbulent, and domineering. He defied the discipline of college, but astonished and delighted his tutors by the extent and the accuracy of his information. His tattered clothes and his ungainly figure were often seen among the courtly and the refined, but he mingled with them only to rule them with the imperious despotism of genius.

Swift, like Johnson, was completely soured by adversity, and, like Goldsmith, he treated the academic studies with supreme contempt. He systematically violated all college rules—absenting himself from night-roll, and chapel, and lectures, haunting public-houses, and in every way

defying discipline. He considered mathematics, logic, and metaphysics useless, and accordingly positively refused to study them. Dr. Sheridan (who was a good mathematician) tells us that in after-life he had attained some proficiency in the first of these subjects, but the hatred and contempt he entertained for it never diminished. His ignorance of logic was so great that at his degree examination he could not even frame a syllogism, and accordingly was unable to pass the examination, and only obtained his degree "by special favour"—a fact which is still remembered with pleasure by the under-graduates who are examined beneath his portrait. Yet, even at this time, his genius was not undeveloped or unemployed. He studied history, he wrote odes, and, above all, he composed his 'Tale of a Tub.' The first draft of this wonderful book he showed to his college friend Warren when he was only nineteen, but he afterwards amplified and revised it considerably, and its publication did not take place till 1704. He also acquired at this time those pedestrian habits which continued through life, and exercised so great an influence upon his mind. He traversed on foot a considerable portion of England and Ireland, mingling with the very lowest classes, and sleeping at the lowest public-houses. The traces of this habit may be seen on almost every page of his writings. Hence, in all probability, the extreme coarseness

that disfigures them ; and hence, too, the minute accuracy and the keen insight into the springs of action, to which they are so greatly indebted for their charm. He seems always to have believed that human nature was best studied among the poor, where education has not overlaid, or conventionalities curtailed, the character. To the very close of his literary career he sought the companionship of such persons, and entered with zest and eagerness into their pursuits.

Before leaving the University, the first gleam of prosperity—though we can scarcely say of happiness—broke upon his life. His mother was related to the wife of Sir W. Temple, and this circumstance procured for him the position of amanuensis at Moor Park, which he held for several years.

Sir William Temple was a man of an eminently lady-like character. With great abilities and great kindness of heart, the chief impressions he left on the mind were those of a refined taste and an exquisite courtesy. He expatiated on beautiful gardens, and objects of art, and philosophical studies. He loved literature, but not with passion. It was to him like the sound of distant music, or the murmur of rushing waters—a means of tranquillising the feelings and banishing unpleasing thoughts. He had himself described “ coolness of temper and blood, and consequently of desires,” as “ the great principle of virtue ;” and his dis-

position seemed almost a realization of his conception. He had passed through a varied and eventful life, with little sorrow, with little turmoil, and with little danger. He had exhibited no splendid virtues, but he had contracted no serious stain. His ambition had been without fire, and his regrets were without poignancy. As a writer, his style was a reflex of his character: it was pure, graceful, and passionless; flowing on with an unbroken melody, but with little force or energy. He discoursed in the same musical but somewhat languid periods on politics and gardens, on Chinese history and the evil of extremes. He seemed specially formed to be the representative of his age, in which taste and judgment were supreme in literature, and passion was ever excluded or diluted by philosophy.

To such a temperament nothing could have been more opposed than Swift's. Intensity was at all times one of Swift's leading characteristics. It was shown alike in his friendships and his enmities; in his ambition and his regrets; in his elation and his despondency. Though little susceptible of the vulgar passion of love, a liquid fire seemed ever coursing through his veins. That "*sæva indignatio*," which he recorded in his epitaph—that burning hatred of wrong—that indomitable pride which pursued him through life—must have often proved strangely at variance with the courtly bearing and the tepid feelings of his

patron. His college habits doubtless gave an additional roughness to his manners; and the ill health, which had already begun to prey upon him, an additional acerbity to his temper.

However, as time advanced, his position at Moor Park improved. He devoted himself most assiduously to study for several years, and thus compensated for his idleness at the University. His favourite subjects appear to have been the classics and French literature; and he read them with the energy of enthusiasm. In 1692 he took his degree of Master of Arts at Oxford, for which University he ever after entertained feelings of grateful regard. He also rose rapidly in Sir W. Temple's estimation, and hoped, through his influence, soon to obtain an independent position. He believed, however (whether justly or unjustly we need not too curiously inquire), that Temple's patronage was very languid, and he at last left Moor Park in anger, and proceeded to Ireland to be ordained. He there found, to his inexpressible dismay, that a letter of recommendation from Temple was an indispensable preliminary to ordination. For months he shrank from the humiliation of asking the letter, but at last he wrote for and received it. He was ordained, and almost immediately after he obtained a small preferment at a place called Kilroot, in the diocese of Connor. Temple, however, in the mean time, had found that Swift's presence was absolutely necessary to his

enjoyment. The extreme amiability of his disposition prevented his retaining any feelings of bitterness, and he made overtures which soon drew the young clergyman from a retirement that was as unsuited to his happiness as to his genius. Swift returned to England, and lived with Temple till the death of the latter, which took place four years after. During this time he was treated not as a dependent, but as a friend. He was admitted into his patron's confidence; his genius was fully recognised; and the bias of his mind determined for life. Living with an old statesman of great experience, sagacious judgment, and varied knowledge, it was natural that his attention should be chiefly turned to politics. His first pamphlet—the ‘Dissentions of the Nobles and Commons of Athens,’—was published somewhat later in the Whig interest. It was extremely successful, and was generally attributed to Bishop Burnet. He had several opportunities of seeing the King, and some of the leading statesmen of the day, who visited Moor Park,—of gauging their intellects, and correcting his theories by their experience.

On one occasion he was deputed by Temple to endeavour to persuade the King to consent to Triennial Parliaments—a mission in which he did not succeed. He also attended largely to literature. He assisted Temple in revising his works, and he defended him against the well-known assaults of Bentley. Temple had rashly com-

mitted himself to the authenticity of some spurious letters attributed to Phalaris, and had launched into an eulogium of these letters in particular, and generally of ancient as opposed to modern literature. The dispute had been warmly taken up by Boyle and Atterbury on one side, and by Bentley on the other. The scholarship of Bentley proved overwhelming, and his opponents were at last driven from the field; but Swift, avoiding judiciously all direct argumentative collision with so formidable an opponent, produced his 'Battle of the Books,' which was then and is now unrivalled in its kind. But it was not merely the gratification of political or literary ambition that made the latter year of Swift's residence at Moor Park so attractive. That strange romance which tinged all his after-years had begun, and his life was already indissolubly connected with that of Esther Johnson.

Esther Johnson, so well known by the name of Stella, was the reputed daughter of the steward of Sir W. Temple, but many persons maintained that Temple himself was her father, and they imagined that they could detect the parentage in her features. The peculiar position she seems to have occupied at Moor Park, and the large legacy left her by Temple, go far to corroborate the supposition. At the time we speak of she was in the very zenith of her personal charms. Her figure, which in after-years lost much of its grace and symmetry,

was then faultless in its proportions. Her beauty was of the highest order, and was of that kind which seems specially intended to be the mirror of the mind. Biographers dilate with rapture upon the loveliness of that pensive countenance, shadowed by the most glossy raven hair, and illumined by dark fathomless eyes trembling with the light of genius. But however great the fascination of her person, it was far surpassed by that of her mind. Though simple and affectionate, and utterly unlike the conventional "learned woman" of plays, she appears to have lived entirely for intellect. It had superseded all grosser passions, all female vanity, all female weakness. She had extended her studies over a wide range of ancient literature, dived into the various systems of philosophy, and imbued her mind deeply with their spirit. Her gentleness, her patience, her tranquillity of temper were remarked by all ; while her dazzling wit astonished and delighted those who heard her. Swift says that in whatever company she moved, it seemed to be invariably admitted that she had said the best thing of the evening; and though the witticisms which he has preserved exhibit at least as much coarseness as point, her principal extant poem, 'To Swift on his birthday in 1721,' fully sustains her reputation.*

The nature of the relation subsisting between

* There is one other short poem, 'Lines to Jealousy,' ascribed to her.

Stella and Swift has never, we think, been satisfactorily ascertained, notwithstanding the great acuteness and industry that have been bestowed upon the inquiry. It seems to be admitted that they never lived as man and wife; but most writers believe that the ceremony of marriage was actually performed. They lived in Ireland in different houses, except during Swift's illnesses. Stella presided at Swift's table, and their correspondence was of the most intimate and affectionate character. The tie that connected them, however, seems to have been entirely that of friendship, of similarity of tastes, and reciprocity of esteem. It is curious to observe how systematically they decried personal beauty: Stella almost exulting in the decline of those charms which she deemed so worthless when compared with the enduring splendours of the mind; and Swift chronicling every symptom of that decline, and building on it compliments to her intellect.

But, Stella, say what evil tongue
Reports that you're no longer young;
That Time sits with his scythe to mow
Where erst sat Cupid with his bow;
That half your locks are turned to gray:
I'll ne'er believe a word they say!
'Tis true—but let it not be known—
My eyes are somewhat dimmish grown;
For Nature, always in the right,
To your defects adapts my sight;
And wrinkles undistinguished pass,
For I'm ashamed to use a glass;

And till I see them with these eyes,
Whoever says you have them, lies.
No length of time can make you quit
Honour and virtue, sense and wit:
Thus you may still be young to me,
While I can better hear than see.
Oh ne'er may Fortune show her spite
To make me deaf and mend my sight!

Upon the death of Temple, Swift was once more thrown upon the world, but his prospects were exceedingly favourable. Temple (who during his long, painful illness, had found Swift unwearied in his attention) had taken every means of ensuring his future prosperity. He left him a pecuniary legacy, together with the charge and profit of publishing his posthumous works, and he had procured for him from King William a promise of a prebend either at Canterbury or Windsor.

Temple's posthumous works were rapidly published and dedicated to the king, who, however, took no notice of the dedication, of his old servant's request, or of his own promise. Shortly afterwards Swift obtained the position of secretary to the Earl of Berkeley, who had been appointed one of the Lords Justices in Ireland; but a person named Bushe succeeded in persuading the Earl that the office should not be held by a clergyman, and in obtaining it for himself. Another disappointment followed. He was almost appointed to the deanery of Down, but the appointment was stayed by the interposition of Archbishop King, who objected to his

extreme youth. Lord Berkeley, as if to compensate for these disappointments, then gave him the living of Laracor and Rathbeggan. He remained for some time at Laracor in the discharge of his clerical duties; and Stella, accompanied by a Mrs. Dingle, a lady of a very negative character, came over and resided near him. Before long, however, he was called from his country living to partake in the great political struggles of the day.

In 1710 the Primate of Ireland sent him to London to endeavour to procure a remission of the payment to the crown by the Irish clergy of the first fruits and the twentieth parts. He succeeded in his mission, and he, at the same time, found himself drawn into the vortex of politics.

The Whig ministry, under Somers and Godolphin, had just fallen. Harley and St. John the leaders of the Tories had succeeded them, but their position was exceedingly precarious. The feelings of the people were against them. The chief political writers of the day assailed them with unsparing severity; and the Queen had, on at least one occasion, slighted them in the most undisguised manner. The age, as Macaulay observes, was essentially an age of essays. The press was yet undeveloped, the speeches of parliament were unreported, but yet a strong intellectual energy pervaded the nation. Under these circumstances the writers of pamphlets, or of short political essays, like the '*Examiner*,' were the real rulers of Eng-

land. In the composition of these essays Swift was unrivalled, except by Addison, and unsurpassed even by him.

The Whigs naturally supposed that he would devote his talents now, as heretofore, to their service, but they soon found that they were mistaken. Swift treated them with marked coldness. He refused, at Lord Halifax's, to drink the 'resurrection' of the Whigs unless it was accompanied by their reformation; and he at length openly joined himself to the Tories. The reasons he assigned for this change are very simple; he had thought originally that the revolution could only be defended on Whig principles, and, therefore, he had been a Whig; but on the other hand, as a clergyman he was a very High-Churchman—he regarded that church-and-state policy which would exclude dissenters from all government offices as of the utmost importance. He believed that the repeal of the sacramental test, or the direct recognition of the dissenters, would be fatal to the Church of England, and he accordingly abandoned the Whigs who advocated these measures. In pronouncing upon his conduct we must remember that at that period the Church was divided between High-Churchmen and Latitudinarians, and that the latter were notoriously lax in their doctrinal views. The Evangelical school had then scarcely any existence. The Tories (though some of them like Bolingbroke were personally infidels) repre-

sented the High-Churchmen, and the Whigs the Latitudinarians. Swift had always been a High-Churchman. Even his 'Tale of a Tub,' coarse and indecent as it often is, had for its object the advocacy of High-Churchism, and since his ordination his views on the subject had been confirmed. He said himself that he could not understand a clergyman being anything else; and he had already published a pamphlet on 'The Repeal of the Sacramental Test,' advocating the High-Church theory. If we add to this that he had never received a favour from the Whigs, and that he had been treated with great coldness by Godolphin, we shall probably arrive at the true reasons of his change.

The principal writers at this time on the Whig side were Addison, Steele, Burnet, Congreve, and Rowe, who were opposed by Atterbury, St. John, and Prior. Addison retired from the arena a few weeks before Swift entered it, and the latter was left without a rival. Whatever we may think of the purity of his political conduct, it is impossible not to admire the intellectual grandeur of the position he occupied. History exhibits few nobler spectacles than a great man guiding a nation by the force of his unaided genius, and moving, like the lights of Heaven, undisturbed by the admiration of which he is the object. For a considerable time the whole political system revolved around this single man. Though he had no rank

or office to distinguish him, though his very name but seldom appeared upon his writings, yet the impulse of his genius was felt in every measure, and dominated over every discussion. The Tory party, assailed by almost overwhelming combinations from without, and distracted by the most serious divisions within, was sustained and defended by him. Its leaders were divided by interest, by temperament, and, in some degree, even by policy; but Swift's genius gained an ascendancy over their minds, and his persuasions long averted the impending collision. Its extreme members had formed themselves into a separate body, and were clamouring for the expulsion of all Whigs from office; but Swift's Letter of Advice to the "October Club" effected the dissolution of that body, and the threatened schism was prevented. The nation—dazzled by the genius of Marlborough, and fired by the enthusiasm of a protracted war—was fiercely opposed to a party whose policy was peace, but Swift's 'Examiners' gradually modified this opposition, and his 'Conduct of the Allies' for a time completely quelled it. The success of this pamphlet has scarcely a parallel in history. It seems to have absolutely reversed the current of public opinion, and to have enabled the Ministers to conclude the Peace of Utrecht. Wherever he moved, he was the chief object of attention. His wit was the delight of every

society, his sayings were the proverbs of every coffee-house. The greatest in rank and influence vied with each other in doing him honour. Among his friends were men of all parties, of all creeds, and of all characters. In the course of a few years he was on most intimate terms with Addison and Steele, with Halifax, Congreve, Prior, Pope, Arbuthnot, and Peterborough, with Harley and St. John, and most of the other leaders of the day. It is strange to observe how this man, whose morbid temper and misanthropical sentiments seem so repulsive to posterity, was valued and loved by the best of the land; how many friendships he formed that time could only mellow, and that adversity could only strengthen; how many tributes of the deepest affection he drew from those who knew him best. "Dear Friend," wrote Arbuthnot, in after years, "the last sentence of your letter plunged a dagger in my heart. Never repeat those sad but tender words, that you will try to forget me. For my part, I can never forget you—at least till I discover, which is impossible, another friend whose conversation could procure me the pleasure I have found in yours." Addison termed him "the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, the greatest genius of his age," and multitudes of similar testimonies have been adduced. These friendships furnish a conclusive answer to the sweeping charges so often brought

against Swift. The man who has formed the closest friendships with men of the most various characters, and has retained them under the most various circumstances, can never be wholly bad, for of all relations friendship is that which implies the most. The good father, the good husband, the good son, may be the creature of instinct or of passion ; but who can overrate the noble qualities that must combine in the faithful and devoted friend ?

Undoubtedly, in the first instance, many of these friendships arose from gratitude. Literature had not yet arrived at the period when it could dispense with patrons, and one of the legitimate goals to which every literary man aspired was a place under the State. This naturally drew the chief writers around Swift, who had an almost complete control of the patronage of Government, and who was employing his influence most nobly and most wisely. There is scarcely a man of genius of the age who was not indebted to him. No dread of rivalry, no narrowness of appreciation, no spirit of nepotism, ever checked the stream of his bounties. Even his political opponents, even men who had written violently against his party, obtained places by his influence. Berkeley was drawn by him from the retirement of college, recommended more than once to the leading Tories, and placed upon the highway of promotion. Congreve was secured at his request

in the place which the Whigs had given him. Parnell, Steele, Gay, Rowe, Phillips, and Diaper received places or other favours by his solicitation. He said himself, with a justifiable pride, that he had provided for more than fifty people, not one of whom was a relation. His influence in society as well as with the Government was ceaselessly employed in favour of literature. He founded the "Scriblerus Club," in which many of the chief writers of the day joined; he exerted himself most earnestly in bringing Pope forward, and obtaining subscriptions for his translation of Homer. He pressed upon the attention of the Government a plan (which is now, however, admitted to have been an unwise one) for watching over the purity of the language, and he on every occasion insisted on marked deference being paid to literary men. He himself took an exceedingly high tone with Harley and St. John; and when the former sent him a sum of money as a compensation for his services, he was so offended that their friendship was well-nigh broken for ever. That this tone was not, as has sometimes been alleged, the vulgar insolence of an upstart, is, we think, sufficiently proved by the deep attachment manifested towards him by both Harley and St. John long after their political connection had terminated.

During all this time Swift kept up a continual correspondence with Stella, in the shape of a

Journal, recording with the utmost minuteness the events of every day. We have the clearest possible evidence that this Journal was not intended for any other eyes than those of Stella and Mrs. Dingle. It is filled with terms of the most childish endearment, with execrable puns, with passages written with his eyes shut, with extempore verses, and extempore proverbs ; with the records of every passing caprice, of every hope, fear, and petty annoyance ; and is evidently a complete transcript of his mind. In that Journal we can trace clearly the eminence to which he rose, and also the shadows that overcast his mind. One of the principal of these was the gradual decline of his friendship with Addison. Addison's habitual coldness had, at first, completely yielded to the charms of Swift's conversation ; they saw each other almost every day ; they lived on the most intimate, the most affectionate, terms. But Swift was a strong Tory, and Addison was a strong Whig ; and Addison was almost identified with Steele, who was still more violent in his politics, and who, though he had received favours from Swift, had made a violent personal attack upon his benefactor,* and had elicited an equally violent reply : and all these things tended to the dissolution of the friendship. There was never an open breach, but their intercourse lost its old cordiality, and the glow of affec-

* In a pamphlet called 'The Crisis.'

tion that had once characterised it passed away never to return. I “went to Mr. Addison’s,” wrote Swift in his Journal, “and dined with him at his lodgings. I had not seen him these three weeks; we are grown common acquaintance, yet what have I not done for his friend Steele! Mr. Harley reproached me the last time I saw him, that, to please me, he would be reconciled to Steele, and had promised and appointed to see him, and that Steele never came. Harrison, whom Mr. Addison recommended to me, I have introduced to the Secretary of State, who has promised me to take care of him; and I have represented Addison himself so to the Ministry, that they think and talk in his favour, though they hated him before. Well, he is now in my debt—there is an end; and I never had the least obligation to him—and there is another end.”

Another source of annoyance to Swift was the difficulty with which he obtained church preferment. He knew that his political position was necessarily exceedingly transient; he had no resources except his living, and he was extremely ambitious. By his influence at least one bishopric and innumerable other places had been given away, and yet he was unable to obtain for himself any preferment that would place him above the vicissitudes of politics. The reason of this was, that the Queen had conceived an intense antipathy to him. Sharpe, the Archbishop of York, had shown

her his ‘Tale of a Tub,’ and had represented him as an absolute infidel. The Duchess of Somerset, whose influence at Court was very great, and whom he had bitterly and coarsely satirised, employed herself with untiring hatred in opposing his promotion, and the impression they made on Anne’s mind was such, that all the remonstrances of the Ministers and all the entreaties of Lady Masham were unable to overcome it.

The charge of scepticism has been reiterated so loudly in the present day that it may be necessary to say a few words upon it. We confess that it seems to us to be grossly unjust. Swift was admirably described by St. John as a “hypocrite reversed.” He invariably exhibited his character and his opinions to the world in their most repulsive aspect. He disguised, as far as possible, his religion, his affections, and his principles, and paraded all the harsher features of his nature with ostentatious daring. If we bear this in mind, the facts of his life seem entirely incompatible with the hypothesis of habitual concealed infidelity. We do not allude merely to the scrupulousness with which he discharged his functions as a clergyman,* to his increasing his duties by reading prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays at Laracor, and daily at St. Patrick’s; to his administering

* It is hardly necessary to say that the “Dearly beloved Roger” anecdote is a fiction. The jest has been found in a jest-book prior to Swift’s time.

the sacrament every week, and paying the most unremitting attention to his choir, and to all other matters connected with his deanery. What we would insist on especially are the many instances of concealed religion which were discovered by his friends. Delany had been weeks in his house before he found out that he had family prayers every morning with his servants. In London he rose early to attend public worship at an hour when he might escape the notice of his friends. He is said to have divided his income into three equal parts, one of which he gave to the poor, and he continued his unostentatious charity when his extreme misanthropy and his extreme avarice must have rendered it peculiarly trying. He was observed in his later years, when it was found necessary to watch him, pursuing his private devotions with the most undeviating regularity ; and some of his letters, written under circumstances of agonising sorrow, contain religious expressions of the most touching character.

It is always dangerous to adduce a few occasional passages in a writer's works as a proof of confirmed and systematic scepticism. An author who exhibits his personality as clearly as Swift does in his books, will inevitably betray his occasional doubts, as well as his settled principles ; and there are probably but few who have followed the light of their reason without fear, or favour, or prejudice, and have yet been wholly exempt from these

doubts,—but few who cannot recall moments when the clouds have hung darkly over their faith, when the balance trembled uncertainly, or when moral repugnances seemed to triumph over logical arguments, and internal difficulties over historical evidence. But should the inquirer be placed among some of the greatest advocates of deism, should he be endowed by nature with the most sensitive and morbid of temperaments, should his lot be cast like Swift's in a period when Christianity seemed to have perished by the development of the age—when its teaching was but a feeble echo of the moral philosophy of paganism—when its churches were lifeless, selfish, and petrified—when the society over which it presided was corrupted to the very core, and had almost discarded the veil of decency with which it had once concealed its depravity,—it would be strange indeed if such an inquirer were never to be assailed by doubts, and were never to manifest them in his writings. We do not deny that doubts such as these may have occasionally passed through the mind of Swift, and may have inspired some passages of the 'Tale of a Tub,' and the poem which Lord Chesterfield sent to Voltaire; but we protest against the theory that would make his life one long hypocrisy, and an hypocrisy of the worst description. In an age when Christianity was chiefly assailed by ridicule, he employed a wit, second perhaps to none which the world has ever

known, in its defence. One of his very happiest pieces is his argument against abolishing Christianity, which was written for this purpose. The coarseness which has been so often and so justly complained of in his writings is never the coarseness of vice. It differs not in degree but in kind from that of Sterne and of Byron. He is often repulsive and disgusting ; he often expatiates with a morbid fondness on objects which good taste would sedulously avoid ; but he never half-lifts the veil of chastity to awaken an impure curiosity, or seeks to invest vice with a meretricious charm. We may apply to his books (with much more justice than it was originally applied) Sterne's clever answer to a lady, who challenged the improprieties of *Tristram Shandy*. " *Madam*," said he, pointing to an infant who was playing on the carpet, " my book is like your young heir ; it shows much that is generally concealed, but it does so with the most perfect innocence."

It was not till the year 1713 that Swift's friends succeeded in obtaining for him the Deanery of St. Patrick's. The appointment was regarded both by him and by them as being far below what he might have expected, for its pecuniary value was not very great, and it implied separation from all his friends, and residence in a country which was then considered the most unenviable abode for a man of genius. He immediately went over to Ireland, intending to remain there for some time,

but was in a few days recalled by his political friends. An open breach had broken out between the Ministers, and the Government seemed on the verge of dissolution. It would be difficult indeed to conceive two men less capable of co-operating with cordiality than Harley and St. John, or, to give them the titles they had by this time acquired, than Oxford and Bolingbroke.

Oxford was a man of very moderate abilities and of very unfortunate manners. Frigid, reserved, and most tenacious of his dignity, he repelled all who did not know him intimately, while his inveterate habit of procrastination paralysed the energies of the Government. On the other hand, he concealed beneath his cold exterior an exceedingly affectionate nature ; he was (except for a propensity to hard drinking, which was then almost universal) stainless in his private life ; and he was deservedly celebrated for his unflinching courage under adversity, for the gentleness and tranquillity of his temper, and for his high appreciation of literature.

Bolingbroke was far superior to his colleague in intellectual attainments, but far inferior to him in moral worth. His life forms one of those strange pictures occasionally to be met with in the pages of history, which seem to reverse all our ordinary conceptions of human nature, and to exhibit the most incompatible qualities combining in the same individual. The son of a worthless

and dissipated character who had fallen in a duel, the young man was early thrown upon the world, surrounded by all the associations of vice, and endowed by nature with a person of most entrancing beauty, with passions so fervid that neither fame nor pleasure could satiate them, and with a genius that was equally adapted to sway a senate or to captivate a heart. He plunged with reckless impetuosity into the life of dissipation that opened out before him, and, in an age of libertines, became conspicuous as a libertine. Yet even at this period he found time to amass stores of curious learning; to imbue his mind deeply with the spirit of the old classics, and to exercise it for the highest speculations.*

* In one of the most beautiful of his later Essays, he gives us the following sketch of his habits:—

“ Not only a love of study and a desire of knowledge must have grown up with us, but such an industrious application likewise as requires the whole vigour of the mind to be exerted in the pursuit of truth through long trains of ideas, and all those dark recesses where man, not God, has hid it. This love and this desire I have felt all my life, and I am not quite a stranger to this industry and application. There has been something always ready to whisper in my ear whilst I ran the course of pleasure and of business,—

‘ *Solve senescentem mature sanus equum.*’

But my genius, unlike the demon of Socrates, whispered so softly, that very often I heard him not in the hurry of those passions by which I was transported. Some calmer moments there were: in them I hearkened to him. Reflection had often its turn, and the love of study and the desire of knowledge never quite abandoned me. I am not, therefore, entirely

He entered Parliament, and immediately rose to the foremost position as an orator. Not a fragment of his speeches remains, but we have reason to believe that they have never been excelled in modern times. The elder Pitt, when speaking of the great works of genius that have been permitted to perish, expressed a wish for the recovery of one speech of Bolingbroke's rather than any lost work of antiquity, and his writings bear on every page the stamp of oratorical genius. Yet this eminence was not sufficient for his ambition. It seems to be now generally admitted that, in defiance of the oath he had sworn and of the principles he maintained, he engaged in intrigues with the Pretender, whom he openly joined on the defeat of his party. He soon, however, quarrelled with his new friends without being reconciled to the Ministry at home, and seemed thus to have thrown up the last stake of his ambition. A libertine whose charms had already begun to fade; an orator who had long fed on popular applause, but was now banished for ever from the arena of his fame; an intriguer against whom every avenue of ambition was closed; impeached by the Whigs, and abandoned by the Tories; hated alike by the Stuarts

unprepared for the life I will lead, and it is not without reason that I promise myself more satisfaction in the latter part of it, than I ever knew in the former."—*True Use of Retirement and Study.*

and the Hanoverians; with a shattered fortune and a blasted character,—it would seem as though nothing remained for him but a retrospect of unmingled bitterness—a life that would be one continued curse, a death that might well be that of the suicide. But no such fate was reserved for Bolingbroke. The mellowing touch of time subdued, though it could not annihilate, the irritability and the impetuosity of his temper, while it developed and expanded his intellectual tastes. No visions of bygone iniquities ever crossed his mind—remorse had no place in the vocabulary of his philosophy. Never was there a man more wonderfully gifted with the power of self-forgiveness. He remembered only the wrongs that had been done him, and he represented himself as an image of suffering virtue. “Ignominy,” he wrote, with amusing hardihood, “can take no hold on virtue, for virtue is in every condition the same, and challenges the same respect. We applaud the world when she prospers, and when she falls into adversity we applaud her. Like the temples of the gods, she is venerable even in her ruins.”* For many years, both in exile and in England after his return, he continued prosecuting his favourite studies with unwearied energy, and evolving in the seclusion of a country life those philosophical ideas which were afterwards embodied by Pope in the ‘Essay on Man.’ He died

* *Reflections in Exile.*

at a great age of a very painful illness, which he is said to have borne with the most exemplary resignation, and his posthumous works showed that he had ended by doubting the existence of a future world.

Bolingbroke's writings are now but little read. They treat chiefly of transient political events, and of a system of philosophy which has long since fallen into desuetude. They were at one time regarded as models of the highest perfection to which written eloquence could reach. Chesterfield said that, if equalled, they were not surpassed by Cicero, and he declared that he would rather his son could attain to Bolingbroke's style than to all the learning of the Universities. They have been especially the study of great orators, and combine, perhaps, more perfectly than any other English writings, those two almost incompatible excellences of speaking and writing — great energy and great repose. Making every allowance for some inaccuracies detected by Bishop Newton, they may be also said to exhibit an amount of information most amazing when we consider the life of the author.

We have dwelt at some length upon the character of Bolingbroke as illustrated by his whole career, both because it is in itself very remarkable, and because it throws much light upon the political complications which Swift had to unravel. Bolingbroke occupied a position subordi-

nate to Oxford in the Ministry; he had been only created a Viscount when Oxford was created an Earl. His ambition had been perpetually trammelled by Oxford's procrastination, and his consciousness of superior genius irritated by Oxford's haughtiness; and the consequence of all this was, that he conceived a strong dislike to his colleague, which at length deepened into an intense hatred. It is no slight proof of Swift's force of character that he could control two such men, or of the charm of his society that he could retain the affection of both. Personally he seems to have been especially attached to Oxford; while politically he was inclined to agree with Bolingbroke, that a prompt, daring, and energetic line of policy was the only means by which the Tory party could be saved.

In truth the position of the Government became every week more desperate. The storm of popular indignation, which had been lulled for a time by 'The Conduct of the Allies,' broke out afresh with tenfold vigour on the conclusion of the Peace of Utrecht. The long duration of the war, the numerous Powers engaged in it, and the many complications that had arisen in its progress, rendered the task of the Ministers so peculiarly difficult that it would be easy to have attacked any peace framed under such circumstances, however consummate the wisdom with which its provisions had been framed. Swift, on

his arrival from Ireland, induced Oxford and Bolingbroke to co-operate once more, and he also wrote a Defence of the Peace of Utrecht. Having accomplished this, he returned to his deanery, leaving his pamphlet in the hands of the Ministers; but they, being unable to agree about the light in which some transactions connected with the peace were to be represented, withheld the publication, and shortly after quarrelled again. Swift again came to England, but this time his interposition proved unavailing. He then retired from the political scene, and occupied himself in preparing a public Remonstrance addressed to the Ministers, blaming the want of harmony in their councils and the indecision and procrastination manifest in their actions. Before, however, this Remonstrance was published, the news arrived that Bolingbroke, by the assistance of Lady Masham, had effected the disgrace of Oxford, and had obtained the chief place in the Ministry. Swift received a letter from Lady Masham (who had always been his warm friend) couched in the most affectionate terms, imploring him to continue to uphold the Ministry by his counsel and by his pen, and enclosing an order upon the Treasury for 1000*l.* for the necessary expenses of induction into his deanery, which Oxford had promised, but, with his usual procrastination, had delayed. He received at the same time a letter from Oxford requesting his presence in the

country, where, as the fallen statesman wrote with a touching pathos, he was going "alone." Swift did not hesitate for a moment between the claims of friendship and the allurements of ambition ; he determined to accompany Oxford.

Events were now succeeding each other with startling rapidity. Bolingbroke had been only four days prime minister when the Tory party learnt with consternation the death of the Queen, and the consequent downfall of their ascendancy. Walpole, who succeeded to the chief power, determined to institute a series of prosecutions for treason against his predecessors. Bolingbroke fled from England and was condemned while absent. Ormond was impeached. Oxford was thrown into the Tower, where he remained for nearly two years, but was at last tried and acquitted. Swift retired to Ireland. A few vague rumours prevailed of his having been concerned in Jacobite intrigues, but they never took any consistency, or seemed to have deserved any attention. The misfortune of his friends was, however, a serious cause of trouble to him, and he defended them in every way in his power, by argument and by satire. The imprisonment of Oxford made an especial impression on his mind, for he entertained feelings of the warmest affection for that statesman, and even wrote to him asking permission to accompany him to prison. He was also at this time, more than once, openly insulted by

some Whigs in Dublin, and he had at first some serious difficulties with the minor clergy of his deanery.

But a far more serious blow was in store for him—a blow that not only destroyed his peace for a season, but left an indelible stigma on his character. When in London he had formed a friendship with Miss Vanhomrigh (better known by the name of Vanessa), a young lady very remarkable for her abilities, though not for her personal beauty. He seems to have been much captivated by her engaging manners and by her brilliant talents; he constantly visited her house, and assisted and directed her in her studies. The possibility of her becoming seriously attached to him seems never for a moment to have flashed through his mind. She was still in the flush of youth, while he had arrived at a period when few can inspire or can experience a warmer affection than that of friendship. He had long been accustomed to a purely intellectual intercourse with Stella; and had probably forgotten how seldom such intercourse retains its first character, and how closely admiration is allied to passion. It was seldom, indeed, that his commanding features—his eye, which Pope described as “azur as the heavens”—and the charm of his manner and of his wit, failed to exercise a powerful influence on those around him. That spell which had caused Lady Masham to burst into tears when announcing the failure of his ambition;

which had controlled Oxford and Bolingbroke in the midst of their dissensions ; which had attached to him so many men of genius by a tie that neither his coarseness, nor ill-temper, nor misfortunes could break,—acted with a fearful power on his young and enthusiastic pupil. She loved him with all the fervour of an impassioned nature ; an almost adoring reverence blended with and enhanced the intensity of her affection. He seemed to her like a being of another sphere ; so great, so fascinating, so gifted, that his image filled her mind. The distraction she manifested in her studies betrayed her emotions, and she was compelled to confess her love. Swift acted with a most fatal, a most culpable irresolution. It may be that he could not tear himself away from a companionship that had so many charms ; it may be that he dreaded the pain that he would inflict upon so sensitive a nature, or the reproaches that would have been poured on him for concealing his connexion with Stella ; or he may have believed that time would prove the best antidote for the disease, and that beneath its influence passion would soon fade into friendship. Whatever may have been his motives, he shrunk from declaring candidly his feelings and his position. The sequel is soon told. Vanessa's passion for him grew stronger every year, and she at length found separation intolerable, and on the death of her sister followed him to Ireland. It was in vain that he

sought to repel her advances without thoroughly disabusing her mind. It was in vain that he endeavoured, by introducing her into society, by surrounding her with the most cultivated and attractive of his acquaintances, to mitigate or to divert her feelings. She continued with a feverish impatience importuning him to marry her; and at length, irritated by his delay, she wrote to Stella. Stella gave the letter to the Dean, who received it with a paroxysm of passion. He rode to Marley, entered the room where Vanessa was sitting, and, darting at her a look of concentrated anger, flung down the letter at her feet and departed without uttering a word. She saw at once that her fate was sealed. She languished away and in a few weeks died. Before her death she revoked the will she had made in favour of Swift, and she ordered the publication of '*Cadenus and Vanessa*', the poem in which he had immortalized her love. Swift fled to the country, and remained for two months buried in the most absolute seclusion.

We turn with pleasure from this melancholy episode to the general tenor of Swift's life in Ireland. The dissensions which had at first existed in his deanery were speedily composed, and he carried on his clerical duties with unremitting energy. He lived in a somewhat parsimonious manner, lodging with a clergyman, but keeping open house twice a week at the deanery. He soon

drew around him many acquaintances and a few friends, the principal of whom were—Delany, who was one of the fellows of Trinity College,—and a schoolmaster named Sheridan, the father of his biographer. Sheridan was in many ways a remarkable character. He was the head of a family which has continued for more than a century to be prolific in genius, having produced a great actor and a great poetess; as well as one of the very greatest of modern orators. He was in many respects a perfect type of the Irish character; recklessly improvident, with boundless good-nature and the most boisterous spirits; full of wit, of fire, and of genius. He carried on a continual warfare with Swift in the shape of puns, charades, satirical poems, and practical jokes. It is refreshing in this age, when a sober intellectual criticism is applied with inflexible severity to every amusement, to observe the boyish and careless delights with which Swift threw himself into these contests. We owe to them many of his best comic poems, and many of the most amusing anecdotes of his life. It was not to be expected, however, that he could withdraw his attention from political affairs, and he soon entered upon that political career which has given him his place in the history of Ireland.

The position of Ireland was at this time one of the most deplorable that can be conceived. The

irreconcilable enmity subsisting between the two sections* of the people had issued in the ruin of both parties. The Roman Catholics had been completely prostrated by the battle of the Boyne and by the surrender of Limerick. They had stipulated indeed for perfect religious liberty, but the treaty of Limerick was soon shamelessly violated, and it found no avengers. Sarsfield and his brave companions had abandoned a country where defeat left no opening for their talents, and had joined the Irish Brigade which had been formed somewhat earlier in the service of France. They carried with them something of the religious fervour of the old covenanters, combined with the military enthusiasm so characteristic of Ireland, and they repaid the noble hospitality of the French by an unflinching and devoted zeal. In the campaign of Savoy, on the walls of Cremona, on the plains of Almanza and of Landen, their courage shone conspicuously. Even at Ramilles and at Blenheim they gained laurels amid the disasters of their friends, while at Fontenoy their charge shattered the victorious column of the English, and wrung from the English monarch the exclamation “Cursed be the laws that deprive me of such subjects.” But while the Irish Roman Catholics abroad found free scope for their

* The two religions mark the lines of the antagonism, but do not seem to have been the cause of it. The war was one of races and not of creeds.

ambition in the service of France, those who remained at home were quiescent beneath the penal laws. The Irish Protestants were rapidly losing their old spirit of independence, and were degenerating into the mere bondslaves of England. A party led by Primate Boulter was labouring most successfully to deprive Ireland of every vestige of her liberty, and to govern her with an exclusive view to the interests of England. By what was afterwards admitted to be a misinterpretation of an old statute, the Irish parliament had been deprived of the power of governing Ireland, and had become little more than a court for registering English laws. Irishmen were systematically excluded from the most lucrative places. The lord-lieutenants were usually absent for three-fourths of their term of office ; the Irish trade was almost entirely paralysed by prohibitions. A third of the rents of the country were said to be expended in England, and the most abject poverty reigned. But perhaps the most deplorable characteristic of the time was the prostration of the spirits of the people. There was no public feeling, no hope, no interest in political affairs. The Irish nation had as yet known no weapon except the sword : it had been broken, and they sank into the apathy of despair.

There had been, however, one remarkable exception. In 1698 Molyneux, a man of great scientific attainments—the “ingenious Irish friend”

mentioned by Locke in his *Essay*—had published his ‘Case of Ireland,’ in which he asserted the independence of the Irish parliament. The arguments he employed were those which were afterwards advanced by Flood and Grattan, and which eventually triumphed in 1782. The position of the author (who was a member of parliament as well as a man of recognised abilities) and the importance of the subject attracted much attention to his book ; but the Government quickly took the alarm, and by order of the English parliament it was burnt by the hand of the common hangman.

Such were the unpropitious circumstances that preceded Swift’s Irish career, and such the oppressions under which his country was groaning. For the Roman Catholics as a distinct body he did absolutely nothing. He had, as we have before seen, espoused warmly the interests and the sentiments of his order, and his patriotism was in consequence restricted. It is a melancholy fact, attested by the experience of every age and of every faith, that the clergy as a body are almost invariably hostile to liberty beyond the pale of their religion, and that there is no act of tyranny or injustice that they will not countenance, provided only it be directed against the opponents of their creed. In the whole of the long period during which the penal laws were crushing the Roman Catholics of Ireland, there does not appear,

as far as we know, to have been a single protest from the Protestant clergy against so glaring a violation of the Protestant principle of religious liberty. Neither in England, when he was guiding the Ministry, nor in Ireland, when he was omnipotent with the people, did Swift make any effort to prevent the infraction of the treaty of Limerick. In one of his Essays against the repeal of the Test Act, he showed that if the Dissenters were admitted to the full privileges of the Constitution, the Roman Catholics should be admitted also, and he seemed to consider that a sufficient *reductio ad absurdum*.

He directed his attention first of all to the state of the Irish manufactures. He published anonymously in 1720 a pamphlet, in which he showed very forcibly their wretched condition, and recommended the people to use exclusively articles made in Ireland, and to burn everything that came from England—"except the coal." The pamphlet made a very great impression, and the printer was in consequence prosecuted. His next productions were the famous Drapier's Letters. Ireland had been for some time suffering from the wants of a sufficiently large copper coinage. Walpole determined to remedy this want, and accordingly gave a person named Wood a patent for coining 108,000*l.* in halfpence. The halfpence were most unquestionably wanted, and they appear to have been in no degree adulterated; but there were many most

objectionable circumstances connected with the transaction. To give the coinage of the realm to a private individual as a speculation, was a procedure quite unknown in England, and in this particular case a serious blow was meditated against the remaining liberties of Ireland. The patent was given without consulting the Irish Parliament, Privy Council, or Lord-Lieutenant. We cannot justify morally the conduct of Swift in this matter ; but there are many circumstances that greatly palliate it. Politics seemed at that time to be placed by common consent almost beyond the range of morals, and there was scarcely a politician who did not systematically do things in public which he would have shrunk from as grossly dishonest in private life. The fate of the treatise of Molyneux showed sufficiently how useless a protest on constitutional grounds would be if the mind of the nation had not before been prepared for its reception. It would have immediately drawn down a prosecution, and there was no public spirit to support it. If, then, the encroachment of the English Government was to be resisted, an agitation must be first created on other than constitutional grounds. A report had gone abroad that the new coins were made of base metal, and this report Swift adopted. He commenced his series of letters (written in the character of a tradesman) by asserting that those who took the new coins would lose eleven pence in every shilling.

He appealed alternately to every section of the community, pointing out how their special interests would be effected by its introduction, concluding with the beggars, who were assured that the coin selected for adulteration had been half-pence, in order that they, too, might be ruined. The most terrific panic was soon created. The Ministry endeavoured to allay it by a formal examination of the coin at the Mint and by a report issued by Sir I. Newton; but the time for such a measure had passed. Swift combated the report in an exceedingly ingenious letter, and the distrust of the people was far too deep to be assuaged.

By this means the needful agitation was produced, and it remained only to turn it into the national channel. This was done by the famous Fourth letter. Swift began by deplored the general weakness and subserviency of the people. "Having," he said, "already written three letters upon so disagreeable a subject as Mr. Wood and his halfpence, I conceived my task was at an end. But I find that cordials must be frequently applied to weak constitutions, political as well as natural. A people long used to hardships lose by degrees the very notions of liberty; they look upon themselves as creatures of mercy, and that all impositions laid on them by a strong hand are, in the phrase of the report, legal and obligatory." He defined clearly and boldly the limits of the pre-

rogative of the Crown, maintaining that while the Sovereign had an undoubted right to issue coin he could not compel the people to receive it; and he proceeded to assert the independence of Ireland and the essential nullity of those measures which had not received the sanction of the Irish legislature. He avowed his entire adherence to the doctrine of Molyneux; he declared his allegiance to the King, not as King of England, but as King of Ireland; and he asserted that Ireland was rightfully a free nation, which implied that it had the power of self-legislation; for "government, without the consent of the governed, is the very definition of slavery." This letter was sustained by other pamphlets, and by ballads which were sung through the streets, and it brought the agitation to the highest pitch. All parties combined in resistance to the obnoxious patent—all parties determined to support the constitutional doctrine. The Chancellor Middleton denounced the coin; the Lords Justices refused to issue an order for its circulation; both Houses of Parliament passed addresses against it; the grand jury of Dublin and the country gentry at most of the quarter-sessions condemned it. Government was exceedingly alarmed. Walpole had already recalled the Duke of Grafton, whom he described as "a fair-weather pilot, that did not know how to act when the first storm arose;" but Lord Carteret, who succeeded him as Lord-Lieutenant,

was equally unable to quell the agitation. A reward of 300*l.* was offered in vain for the discovery of the author of the Fourth letter. A prosecution was instituted against the printer; but the grand jury refused to find the bill, and persisted in their refusal, notwithstanding the violent and indecorous conduct of Chief Justice Whiteshed. The feelings of the people grew daily stronger, and at last Walpole was compelled to yield and to withdraw the patent.

Such were the circumstances of this memorable contest; a contest which has been deservedly placed in the foremost ranks in the annals of Ireland. There is no more momentous epoch in the history of a nation than that in which the voice of the people has first spoken, and spoken with success. It marks the transition from an age of semi-barbarism, to an age of civilization; from the government of force, to the government of opinion. Before this time rebellion was the natural issue of every patriotic effort in Ireland. Since then rebellion has been an exceptional phenomenon, an anachronism, and a mistake. The age of Desmond and of O'Neil had passed. The age of Grattan and of O'Connell had begun.

Swift was admirably calculated to be the leader of public opinion in Ireland, from his complete freedom from the characteristic defects of the Irish temperament. His writings exhibit no tendency to exaggeration or bombast; no fallacious

images or farfetched analogies; no tumid phrases in which the expression hangs loosely and inaccurately around the meaning. His style is always clear, keen, nervous, and exact. He delights in the most homely Saxon, in the simplest and most unadorned sentences. His arguments are so plain that the weakest mind can grasp them, yet so logical that it is seldom possible to evade their force. Even his fictions exhibit everywhere his antipathy to vagueness and mystery. As Emerson observes, "He describes his characters as if for the police-court." It has been often remarked that his very wit is a species of argument. He starts from some one ludicrous conception, such as the existence of minute men, or the suitability of children for food, and he proceeds to examine that conception in every aspect; to follow it out to all its consequences; and to derive from it, systematically and consistently, a train of the most grotesque ideas. He seeks to reduce everything to its most practical form and to its simplest expression. He sometimes affects not even to understand inflated language. It is curious to observe an Irishman, when addressing the Irish people, laying hold of a careless expression attributed to Walpole—that he would pour the coin down the throats of the nation—and arguing gravely that the difficulties of such a course would be insuperable. This shrewd, practical, unimpassioned tone was especially needed in Ireland.

To employ Swift's own image, it was a medicine well suited to correct the weaknesses of the national character.

After the 'Drapier's Letters' Swift published several minor pieces on Irish affairs, but most of them are very inconsiderable. The principal is his 'Short View of the State of Ireland,' published in 1727, in which he enumerated fourteen causes of a nation's prosperity, and showed in how many of these Ireland was deficient. He also brought forward the condition of the country indirectly, in his amusing proposal for employing children for food—a proposal which a French writer is said to have taken literally, and to have gravely adduced as a proof of the wretched condition of the Irish. His influence with the people, after the authorship of the 'Drapier's Letters' was declared, was unbounded. Walpole once spoke of having him arrested, and was asked whether he had ten thousand men to spare, for they would be needed for the enterprise. We have a curious proof of the extent of his reputation in a letter written by Voltaire, then a very young man, requesting him to procure subscriptions in Ireland for the 'Henriade;' a request with which Swift complied, though he had always refused to publish his own works by subscription.

The remainder of his political career presents little on which we need dwell in so slight a sketch as the present. In 1726 he went to England, after

an absence of twelve years. He was introduced to Walpole, who received him with marked civility, and whom he endeavoured to interest, both directly and through the medium of Peterborough, in Irish affairs. He also revisited his old friends Pope and Bolingbroke, but was soon recalled by the news that Stella was dying. He returned in haste, scarcely expecting to find her alive. "I have been long weary," he wrote, "of the world, and shall, for my small remainder of years, be weary of life, having for ever lost that conversation which could alone make it tolerable." Stella, however, lingered till 1728. The close of her life was in keeping with the rest, mysterious and inexplicable. The younger Sheridan states that she let fall some expressions clearly implying that she had been married secretly to Swift; that she desired him to acknowledge the marriage; that he refused till the very last moment to do so; and that she accordingly, just before her death, irritated by his refusal, made her will alienating her property from him. This statement has received all the refutation of which the nature of the case will admit. It has been shown that the will was made a full month before her death; and a letter of Swift's, written two years earlier, has been produced, in which he expressed a wish that she could be persuaded to make it, and mentioned incidentally that it was her intention to leave her property to Steven's

hospital. This proves most conclusively that she did not make her will contrary to his wish or upon the impulse of the moment. It does not appear that Swift was ever during his life accused of harshness towards her, or that she ever complained of his conduct. She left him all her papers, as well as a bond for 30*l.* The bulk of her property, as we have said, she bequeathed to Steven's hospital, to revert to her nearest relative in the event of the disendowment of the Established Church. It is remarkable that Swift provided for the same contingency in the case of some tithes which he purchased when at Laracor, and left to his descendants.

Whatever may have been the relation subsisting between Stella and Swift, it is plain that when she died the death-knell of his happiness had struck. That morbid melancholy to which he had ever been subject assumed a darker hue and a more unremitting sway as the shadows began to lengthen upon his path. It had appeared very vividly in 'Gulliver's Travels,' which were published as early as 1726, and which, perhaps, of all his works, exhibits most frequently his idiosyncrasies and his sentiments. We find his old hatred of mathematics, displayed in the history of *La-puta*; his devotion to his disgraced friends, in the attempt to cast ridicule on the evidence on which *Atterbury* was condemned; his antipathy to *Sir I. Newton*, whose habitual absence of mind is said

to have suggested the flappers ; and, above all, his deep-rooted contempt for mankind, in his picture of the Yahoos. His view of human nature, perhaps, differs little from that professed by a large religious school of the present day; but with Swift it was no figure of speech, no mere pulpit dogma, but a deeply realized fact. He had surveyed his century with a glance widely different from that of most of his contemporaries. He had gauged its principles, he had tested its honours, and he had discerned its hollowness. He had found corruption pervading every department of the State; intrigue, and selfishness, and hypocrisy flourishing as perhaps they had never before flourished in England; the old systems of religion corroded and decayed, and a heartless cant reigning in their stead. He cast a retrospect over his life, and his deliberate opinion seems to have been that man was hopelessly corrupted ; that with the mass virtue was but a name, and happiness but a dream ; that the evil preponderates over the good, and that life itself is a curse. He appears to have adopted, as far as this world was concerned, Bolingbroke's sentiment, that there is so much trouble in entering it, and so much in leaving it, that it is scarcely worth while being here at all.

Age had begun to press heavily upon him, and age he had ever regarded as the greatest of human ills. In his picture of the Immortals, he had painted its attendant evils as they had perhaps

never been painted before. He had ridiculed the reverence paid to the old, as resembling that which the vulgar pay to comets, for their beards and their pretensions to foretel the future. He had predicted that, like the blasted tree, he would himself die first at the top. Those whom he had valued the most had almost all preceded him to the tomb. Oxford, Arbuthnot, Peterborough, Gay, Lady Masham, and Rowe, had one by one dropped off. Of all that brilliant company who had surrounded him in the days of his power, Pope and Bolingbroke alone remained; and Pope was sinking under continued illness, and Bolingbroke was drawing his last breath in the more congenial atmosphere of France. Sheridan had gone with broken fortunes to a school at Cavan; Stella had left no successor. His niece, Mrs. Whiteway, watched over him with unwearied kindness, but she could not supply the place of those who had gone.

He looked forward to death without terror and without pain, but his mind quailed at the prospect of the dotage and the decrepitude that precedes it. He had seen the greatest general and the greatest lawyer of his day sink into a second childhood, and he felt that the fate of Marlborough and of Somers would at last be his own. A large mirror once fell to the ground in the room where he was standing. A friend observed how nearly it had killed him. "Would to God," he exclaimed,

“that it had!” His mind at length gave way. His flashes of wit became fewer and fewer, and at length he sank into a condition approaching imbecility, while at the same time his passions became wholly ungovernable. He constantly broke into paroxysms of the wildest fury, into outbursts that were scarcely distinguishable from insanity. Avarice, the common vice of the old, came upon him with a fearful power. He had lost his friends, his talents, and his health, and he clung with desperate tenacity to money, the only thing that remained. He shrank from all hospitality, from all luxuries, from every expense that it was possible to avoid. Yet even at this time he refused a considerable sum which was offered him to renew a lease on terms that would be disadvantageous to his successors.

At length the evil day arrived. A tumour, accompanied by the most excruciating pain, arose over one of his eyes. For a month he never gained a moment of repose. For a week he was with difficulty restrained by force from tearing out his eye. The agony was too great for human endurance. It subsided at last, but his mind had wholly ebbed away. It was not madness; it was absolute idiocy that ensued. He remained passive in the hands of his attendants without speaking, or moving, or betraying the slightest emotion. Once, indeed, when some one spoke of the illuminations by which the people were cele-

brating the anniversary of his birthday, he muttered, "It is all folly, they had better leave it alone." Occasionally he endeavoured to rouse himself from his torpor, but could not find words to form a sentence, and with a deep sigh he relapsed into his former condition. It was not till he had continued in this state for two years, that he exchanged the sleep of idiocy for the sleep of death.

He died in 1747, and was buried near the grave of Stella, in his own cathedral, where the following very characteristic epitaph, written by himself, marks his grave :—

" Hic depositum est corpus
Jonathan Swift, S. T. P.
Hujus Ecclesiae Cathedralis
Decani.
Ubi seva indignatio
Cor ulerius lacerare nequit.
Abi viator,
Et imitare si poteris,
Strenuum pro virili libertatis vindicatorem."

His property he left to build a madhouse. It would seem as though he were guided in his determination by an anticipation of his own fate. He himself assigned another reason. He says in his poem on his own death :—

" He left the little wealth he had
To build a house for fools and mad,
To show by one satiric touch,
No nation needed it so much."

The reputation of Swift has suffered from a variety of causes. He was the leading representative of Irish principles which writers on the other side of the Channel are accustomed to treat with habitual ridicule and contempt, and of an English party which has of late years been rapidly falling into disrepute. It was also his misfortune to number among his acquaintances a person who employed the intimacy afforded him in chronicling every symptom of ill-temper for the benefit of posterity. Lord Orrery was in every way unfit to paint the character of Swift. He was so deficient in abilities that his father is said to have left away his library from him, and his shallowness is exhibited in every page of his book. He knew Swift only during his latter years, and the estimation in which he was held by him is sufficiently shown by the fact that one of his letters was found in Swift's desk unopened, and with the endorsement, "this will keep cold." His recollections have furnished abundant matter for the assailants of Swift, and it is not surprising that they have been much employed by Whig and Anti-Irish writers, and by those professors of literary anatomy who delight in expatiating upon the defects of the great.

In truth it was one of Swift's chief misfortunes that he never concealed his feelings and his sentiments. Had he been but a little addicted to hypocrisy he would have been far more popular

than he is. He was a man whose temperament was never deranged by prosperity, but who grew acrid and virulent in adversity. To the multitude his character seemed often repulsive and revolting, but few men have elicited more affection from their friends, and it was always those who knew him best who admired him most. He was endowed with satiric powers of the very highest order, and he employed them sometimes in defending his religion and his country—in lashing impostors like Partridge, or arrogant lawyers like Bettersworth, —but too often in unworthy personal quarrels, or in assailing harmless mediocrity. Through his whole life his mind was positively diseased. A morbid melancholy, a ceaseless irritability that seemed like incipient madness, continually preyed on him, and discoloured and distorted every object on his path. It is melancholy to observe how often it is so with the great. A few illustrious examples there have been of faculties as harmonious as they were colossal; but the domestic calamities, the monomanias and unhappiness and eccentricities, that occupy so disproportionate a place in literary biography, show but too plainly how commonly genius is, like the pearl, the offspring and the accompaniment of disease. The excessive expansion of one faculty destroys the symmetry of the mind. A too vivid imagination proves incompatible with tranquillity, or the intellectual powers are developed to the detriment of the heart. The

fire that illumines the world blasts the organ from which it radiates, and the power of conferring pleasure on others is purchased by a disordered temperament and an unhappy life. Swift was peculiarly subject to this disease. He was endowed with most fervid passions, with a far deeper and more intense nature than his literary contemporaries. His life was embittered by the disappointment of his ambition, by continual ill health, and by an unsuitable profession. To represent him as a perfect character, either morally or intellectually, would be of course absurd; but his faults were redeemed by devoted friendship and noble generosity, and his weaknesses by a colossal and versatile intellect. The sustainer of a Ministry, the pacificator of Europe, the creator of public opinion in Ireland, the verdict of posterity has pronounced him the most original, if not the greatest, genius of his age; and, with the exception of Voltaire and Rousseau, the writer who exercised the most important influence upon his kind.

His books have suffered little from time. The increased refinement of the age has deprived him indeed of many readers, but it has not, we think, diminished the appreciation of his genius; and in this respect he differs remarkably from some of his contemporaries. It has been the fortune of Pope to produce a multitude of imitators, who have rendered his versification hackneyed, and have effected

a reaction, in which he is as unduly depreciated as he was once perhaps unduly extolled. Addison, though always read with pleasure, has lost his old supremacy. The age demands something more nervous and stimulating than is to be found in his writings; and even in his own style it would not be difficult to adduce passages from Goldsmith or from Lamb that might be compared without disadvantage with the best papers of the 'Spectator.' But Swift's position is unaltered. The Melchise-deck of literature, he had no precursor, and has had no follower. 'Gulliver' and the 'Tale of a Tub' remain isolated productions—unrivalled, unimitated, and inimitable.

HENRY FLOOD.

THE efforts of Swift had created a public opinion in Ireland, but had not provided for its continuance. A splendid example had been given, and the principles of liberty had been triumphantly asserted, but there was no permanent organ to retain and transmit the national sentiment. The Irish Parliament, which seemed specially intended for this purpose, had never been regarded with favour by Swift. He had satirised it bitterly as the Legion Club—

“Not a bowshot from the college,
Half the world from sense and knowledge;”

and its constitution was so defective, and its corruption so great, that satire could scarcely exaggerate its faults. To fire this body with a patriotic enthusiasm, to place it at the head of the national movement, and to make it in a measure the reflex of the national will, was reserved for the subject of our present sketch.

HENRY FLOOD was the son of the Chief Justice of the King's Bench in Ireland. He entered

Trinity College as a Fellow-Commoner, but terminated his career, as is still sometimes done, at Oxford. While at the University he applied himself with much energy to the classics, and especially to those studies which are advantageous to an orator in forming a pure and elevated style. For this purpose he learnt considerable portions of Cicero by heart. He wrote out Demosthenes and *Œschines* on the Crown, two books of the 'Paradise Lost,' a translation of two books of Homer, and the finest passages from every play of Shakespeare. Like most persons who combine great ambition with great powers of expression, he devoted himself much to poetry ; his principal production being an 'Ode to Fame,' which is said to have been once thought very good, but which, we confess, seems to us to be much the reverse. He was also passionately addicted to private theatricals, which were then very fashionable, and which contributed not a little to form his style of elocution.

The portraits drawn by his contemporaries are exceedingly attractive. They represent him as genial, frank, and open ; endowed with the most brilliant conversational powers, and the happiest manner, "the most easy and best-tempered man in the world, as well as the most sensible." * His figure was exceedingly graceful, and his counten-

* Grattan.

ance, though afterwards soured and distorted by disease, was originally of corresponding beauty. He was of a remarkably social disposition, delighting in witty society and in field-sports, and readily conciliating the affection of all classes. By his marriage he had obtained a large fortune, and was therefore enabled to devote himself exclusively to the service of the country. When we add to this, that he was a man of great eloquence, sincere patriotism, indomitable courage, and singularly acute judgment, it will be seen that he possessed almost every requisite for a great public leader.

He entered Parliament in 1759 as member for Kilkenny, being then in his 27th year, and took his seat on the benches of the Opposition.

We have said that the Irish Parliament was at this time subservient and corrupt, and a few facts will show clearly the extent of the evil. The Roman Catholics, who were the vast majority of the population, were excluded from all representation, both direct and indirect. They could not sit in Parliament, and they could not vote for Protestant members. The borough system, which had been chiefly the work of the Stuarts, had been developed to such an extent, that out of the 300 members who composed the Parliament, 216 were returned for boroughs or manors. Of these borough members, 200 were elected by 100 individuals,

and nearly 50 by 10.* Taking human nature as it is, it is sufficiently evident that, under ordinary circumstances, a Ministry could always command a majority in a Parliament so constituted, if it had sufficient patronage at its disposal. This was provided for by a long and ever-increasing list of sinecure or superfluous offices, and of pensions given for imaginary services, and thus the country paid annually a considerable sum for stifling the voice of its own representatives. It was important, however, that the Parliament should be secured as far as possible from all fear of popular indignation, and accordingly, unless dissolved by the will of the Sovereign, it lasted for an entire reign. By this arrangement the members were made almost entirely independent of their constituents, and could pursue their private ends with little fear of retribution. At the same time the dependence of the Irish Parliament was unequivocally asserted, and its bills were altered without scruple by the Privy Council.

The speaking, as might be expected, was very bad. Eloquence usually implies a certain amount of patriotic enthusiasm, and can scarcely exist when the overwhelming majority are governed by corrupt motives. It is not surprising, therefore,

* We take these figures from Grattan's Life by his son, which is, we think, much the amplest and best history of the closing years of the Irish Parliament.

that before Flood Ireland had not produced a single orator of eminence.

Such was the condition of the Parliament when Flood entered upon his career and made his maiden speech against Primate Stone,* the most conspicuous supporter of the English party. The eloquence and the position of the young member made him at once a leader of the Liberals.

As an orator he does not appear to have been equal to two or three who afterwards arose in Ireland. He was too sententious and too laboured ; he had, at least, in his later years, but little fire, and but little grace of language, though much of gesture. His reasoning powers were extremely great. To those who are acquainted with Grattan's speeches, and know the wonderful manner in which that orator condensed an argument into an epigram, and disencumbered it of all superfluous matter, it will be sufficient to say that Flood was invariably considered the most convincing reasoner of the two. Perhaps no speaker ever marshalled his facts with more felicity, or drew his arguments to a climax with more crushing force. He was also a great master of grave sarcasm, of invective,

* It is remarkable that two primates should have occupied this prominent political position—Boulter in the time of Swift, and Stone a little later. Primate Stone deserves to be remembered as being almost the only conspicuous person who encouraged and defended Hume amid the storm of hostile and contemptuous criticism with which his History was at first assailed.

and of reply. There was an air of solemn dignity in his manner which added much to the effect of his greater speeches, but which did not suit trivial subjects. Grattan said of him, that “on a small subject he was miserable. Put a distaff into his hand, and, like Hercules, he made sad work of it; but give him a thunderbolt, and he had the arm of a Jove.” The only speaker who was at all able to cope with him in the earlier part of his career was Hely Hutchinson, the Provost of Trinity College, who was superior to him in light sarcasm and raillery, but inferior in all beside

His indefatigable exertions soon produced their fruit. Public opinion began to show itself outside the walls of Parliament, and a powerful opposition was organised within. The chief objects he proposed to himself were the shortening of the duration of Parliament, the reduction of the pension-list, the creation of a constitutional militia, and the establishment of the principles of Molyneux. In pursuing the first of these objects, he found a powerful auxiliary in Charles Lucas, a very remarkable man who then occupied a prominent position in Irish politics. Lucas had been originally a Dublin apothecary, with little education and no property, but with a vigorous intellect and an indomitable resolution. In 1741 he had detected and exposed some encroachments that had been made upon the charters of Irish corporate towns, and from that time he devoted

himself continually to politics. He asserted the independence of Ireland so unequivocally, and he denounced the corruption of Parliament in so pointed and personal a manner, that the grand jury of Dublin at last ordered his addresses to be burnt, and the Parliament proclaimed him an enemy to the country, and issued a warrant for his apprehension. He fled to England, where he became a physician and practised with some success, and he wrote in exile an appeal to the people of both countries, as well as a treatise on Bath waters. A *noli prosequi* at last enabled him to return, and his popularity was so great that he was elected member for Dublin. He had lost the use of his limbs, and his speeches—which were very forcible but very vituperative—were all delivered sitting. He denounced the pensioners and the Government with unsparing bitterness, but there was no one against whom his sarcasm was more envenomed than against his own colleague. That colleague was the Recorder of Dublin, the father of Henry Grattan. Lucas brought forward a Septennial Bill, but it never became law. He assisted Flood in Parliament by his speeches, and out of Parliament by articles in the 'Freeman's Journal,' which he had originated, and which was the foundation of the Irish Liberal press. He died in 1771.*

* His pamphlets and addresses have been collected: they form one thick volume.

The efforts of Flood were at last successful, and by his means the duration of Parliament was limited to eight years. This was the first great step towards making the Parliament subject to the will of the people. It was almost the first evidence of its life; it was the foundation upon which all its subsequent achievements were based.

The viceroyalty of Lord Townshend forms a memorable epoch in Irish history. Never were the claims of the English Government more injudiciously asserted, and never were they more triumphantly repelled. Three times money-bills altered by the Privy Council were sent to Parliament, and three times, at the instigation of Flood, they were ignominiously rejected. The Commissioners of Revenue, who were not allowed to sit in the English Parliament, had seats in that of Ireland, and Lord Townshend determined to increase their number from seven to twelve. Flood denounced the proposed measure, and the Parliament passed a resolution asserting the sufficiency of seven. In accordance with another resolution, the House formally laid their opinion before Lord Townshend, who carried out his intention notwithstanding. A direct vote of censure was then moved, and carried by the casting vote of the Speaker, and Lord Townshend was thus obliged to resign, and the authority of Parliament was vindicated.

During the course of this contest, a series of political papers appeared in Dublin, which at-

tracted much attention from their eloquence and their wit. They consisted of a history of Barataria, being a sketch of Lord Townshend's administration, with fictitious names; of a series of letters modelled after Junius; and of three or four satirical poems. The history and the poems were by Sir Hercules Langrishe, the dedication and the letters signed "Posthumus" and "Pertinax" by Grattan, and those signed "Syndercombe" by Flood. Flood's letters are powerful and well-reasoned, but, like his speeches, too laboured in style, and they certainly give no countenance to the notion started at one time that he was the author of the Letters of Junius.

Flood had now attained to a position that had as yet been unparalleled in Ireland. He had shown that pure patriotism and great abilities could find scope in the Irish Parliament. He had proved himself beyond all comparison the greatest orator that his country had produced, and also a consummate master of parliamentary tactics. In the midst of corruption and venality, of evidences of subserviency, and of traditions of defeat, he had created a party before which Ministers had begun to quail—a party which had wrung from England a concession of inestimable value, which had inoculated the people with the spirit of liberty and of self-reliance, and which promised to expand with the development of public opinion till it had broken every fetter and had recovered

every right. No rival had as yet risen to detract from his fame, no suspicion rested upon his conduct. Calumny itself had never dared to impugn his motives, and his opponents admired while they denounced him. The tide now began to turn. We have henceforth to describe the rapid decadence of his power. We have to follow him descending from his proud position, eclipsed by a more splendid genius, soured by disappointment, and clouded by suspicion, and sinking, after one brilliant flash of departing glory, into a position of comparative insignificance.

The administration of Lord Harcourt succeeded that of Lord Townshend. It was conducted on more liberal principles, and Flood at first supported it as an independent member, and at length consented to accept the office of Vice-Treasurer. The charge of being guided in this matter by a love of money is, we think, exceedingly unfair. Such a charge should never be brought against a patriot of long-tried virtue, when other plausible motives may be assigned for his conduct. Flood had been discouraged by a succession of defeats, and he believed that a long period must necessarily elapse before the great objects of his policy could be attained. He could not predict the wonderful impulse given to the national cause by the American war, the eloquence of Grattan, and the arms of the Volunteers. He estimated the strength of parties when

Ireland was in its normal condition, and he concluded that the discussion of the independence of Parliament might be advantageously postponed, if its postponement were purchased by some minor concessions on the part of the Government. By becoming Vice-Treasurer he opened to Irishmen an office from which they had been hitherto excluded, he silenced the cry of faction which had sometimes been raised against him, and he proved the compatibility of national principles with perfect attachment to the Crown. Ministers had shown themselves willing to make considerable concessions to the people, in order to obtain his support. Some prospect had been held out of a relaxation of the commercial restrictions. They had distinctly authorised him to propose an absentee-tax, and he was not without hopes of being able still further to modify their policy. These reasons, enforced by the persuasive powers of Sir John Blacquiere, determined him to accept office, and would be sufficient to exculpate him from the charge to which we have referred, even if his large property had not placed him in a great measure above temptation.

Lord Charlemont protested strongly against this resolution of Flood, and there can be no doubt that it formed the fatal turning-point of his life. For nearly seven years he remained in office, and during that period he was obliged to keep absolute silence on those great constitutional questions

which in former years he had ceaselessly expounded. His character was no longer above suspicion, and the confidence of the people—the chief element of his power—had passed away for ever. The popular mind always detects readily a change of opinions or of policy, but seldom cares to analyse the motives that may have produced it. The absentee tax which he introduced met with considerable opposition, and the Government at length abandoned it. The commercial relaxations that he expected were pertinaciously withheld. A two years' embargo was imposed upon Ireland, in consequence of the American war; and in this unpopular measure he was compelled to acquiesce. 4000 Irish troops were sent to fight against the Americans. The inducement was, that the pay would be saved to Ireland; the objections were, that it left Ireland without the stipulated number of troops, and in a measure defenceless; and that this extraordinary exertion seemed to imply an extraordinary amount of zeal against a cause which all Liberals regarded as that of justice and of freedom. Flood defended the measure, and designated the troops as “armed negociators.” It was to this unfortunate expression that Grattan alluded when he described him in his famous invective as standing “with a metaphor in his mouth and with a bribe in his pocket, a champion against the rights of America—the only hope of Ireland, and the only refuge of the liberties of mankind.”

But results such as no one had predicted soon sprang from this measure. The Mayor of Belfast called upon the Government to place a garrison in that town to protect it against the French, and was informed that half a troop of dismounted cavalry and half a troop of invalids were all that could be spared to defend the commercial capital of Ireland.

Then arose one of those movements of enthusiasm that occur two or three times in the history of a nation. The cry to arms passed through the land, and was responded to instantaneously by all parties and by all creeds. The war of classes and of castes, the jealousies, and recriminations, and antipathies that had so long divided the people vanished as a dream. The inertness produced by centuries of oppression was speedily forgotten, and replaced by the consciousness of recovered strength. From Howth to Connemara, from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear, in the secluded mountain valleys and in the populous towns, wherever the Irish voice was heard, wherever the Irish nationality was cherished—the spirit of enthusiasm had passed and the creation of an army had begun. The military authorities who could not defend the country could not refuse to arm those who had arisen to supply their place. Though the population of Ireland was little more than half of what it is at present, 80,000 men soon assembled, disciplined and appointed as a regular army, fired by

the strongest enthusiasm, and moving as a single man. They rose to defend their country alike from the invasion of a foreign army and from the encroachments of an alien legislature. Faithful to the connexion between the two countries, they determined that that connexion should rest upon mutual respect and upon essential equality. In the words of one of their own resolutions, “they knew their duty to their sovereign, and they were loyal; they knew their duty to themselves, and they were resolved to be free.” They were guided by the chastened wisdom, the unquestioned patriotism, the ready tact of Charlemont. Conspicuous among their Colonels was Flood, not uninjured in his reputation by his ministerial career, yet still reverent from the memory of his past achievements, and the splendour of his yet unfading intellect; and there too, was he, before whose genius all other Irishmen had begun to pale,—the patriot of unsullied purity—the statesman who could fire a nation by his enthusiasm and restrain it by his wisdom—the orator whose burning sentences became the very proverbs of freedom—the gifted, the high-minded Henry Grattan.

It was a moment of supreme danger for the empire. The energies of England were taxed to the utmost by the war, and there could be no reasonable doubt that the Volunteers, supported by the people, could have wrested Ireland from

its grasp. A nation unhabituated to freedom, and maddened by centuries of oppression, had suddenly acquired this overwhelming power. Could its leaders restrain it within the limits of moderation? Or if it was in their power, was it in their will?

The voice of the Volunteers soon spoke, in no equivocal terms, on Irish politics. They resolved that "Citizens, by learning the use of arms, forfeit none of their civil rights;" and they formed themselves into a regular convention with delegates and organisation, for the purpose of discussing the condition of the country. Their denunciations of the commercial and legislative restrictions grew louder and louder; and two cannons were shown labelled with the inscription "Free Trade or this!"

In Parliament Grattan and Hussey Burgh made themselves the interpreters of the prevailing feeling. The latter, in a speech which was long remembered as a masterpiece of eloquence, described the condition of the country, and called upon the ministers to avert war by timely and ample concessions. "Talk not to me," he exclaimed, "of peace; it is not peace, but smothered war. You have sown your laws in dragon's teeth, and they have sprung up in armed men." The restrictions on trade were made the special objects of attack. The export of wool from Ireland had been entirely prohibited, and the commerce

with the Plantations in many ways crippled. The Irish had demanded to be placed on the same footing as the English, but their petition had been hitherto uniformly refused. Burgh now moved, as an amendment to the address from the throne, a petition for "an extension of trade." Flood, who was still a minister, rose and suggested that the expression, "free trade" should be employed, and spoke in favour of the amendment, which was carried. The House went in a body to present their petition to the Lord Lieutenant, and the Volunteers lined the road and presented arms to them as they passed. The due emphasis was thus supplied to their request, and Lord North soon after brought forward in England some relaxations of the Irish commercial code.

The events we have described rendered the position of Flood as Minister still more irksome than it had been, and at last he threw up his office and rejoined his old friends. The Ministers marked their displeasure at his conduct by dismissing him from the council; and he never regained his former position among the Liberals. He found that his long services had been forgotten during his long silence, that the genius of Grattan had obtained a complete ascendancy in Parliament, and that the questions he had for so many years discussed were taken out of his hands. He felt the change very acutely, and it exercised a perceptible influence upon his temper. In

1779, Yelverton brought forward a bill for the repeal of Poyning's Law; and Flood, while supporting the measure, complained bitterly that "after a service of twenty years in the study of this particular question" he had been superseded. He added: "The honourable gentleman is erecting a temple of liberty. I hope that at least I shall be allowed a niche in the fane." Yelverton retorted by reminding them that by the civil law, "if a man should separate from his wife, desert and abandon her for seven years, another might then take her and give her his protection."

We pass over the events of the next few years, the discussions of the Volunteers, and the ultimate triumph of Irish independence, as belonging more especially to the life of Grattan. The next prominent transaction in which Flood appears was the fatal controversy on the subject of Simple Repeal. How far in this matter he was actuated by personal motives, and how far by pure patriotism, it is impossible to determine. This much, however, is plain—that he supported every step of his policy by powerful if not by conclusive arguments, and that he carried with him a very large section of the intellect of the country. The broad question on which he differed from Grattan was, the advisability of continuing the Volunteer convention. Grattan wished Ireland to subside into its normal condition as soon as the independence

of the Parliament had been declared ; he felt the danger and the irregularity of having the representatives of an armed force organised like an independent Parliament, and overawing all other authority in the land. He considered that Parliamentary reforms should emanate from Parliament alone, and should be the result of no coercion, except that of public opinion. Flood, on the other hand, perceived that Ireland was in a position, with reference to England, such as it might never occupy again ; he believed that by continuing the convention a little longer, guarantees of the Irish independence might be obtained, such as it would be impossible afterwards to overthrow ; and that Parliament might be so reformed as to be made completely subject to public opinion, and therefore completely above the danger of ministerial intrigue. He foresaw what Grattan at that time does not appear to have foreseen, that the English ministers would never cordially accept the new position of Ireland ; that they would plot against it year by year ; that they would avail themselves of every extraordinary circumstance, of every means of corruption in their power, to strangle the independence of Parliament : and that the borough system gave them a fatal facility for the accomplishment of their purpose.

The Simple Repeal controversy may be thus shortly stated. There existed an old statute, called

Poyning's Law, of ambiguous meaning.* The English declared that it established the dependence of the Irish Parliament; while the Irish Liberals, from Molyneux to Grattan, maintained that this was a gross misinterpretation of its language. The Parliament of England fixed the sense by a declaratory Act, asserting the dependence of that of Ireland, and it was on these two enactments that its authority in Ireland rested. In 1782 the Irish Parliament asserted its own independence, and the English Parliament repealed its declaratory Act. The question at issue was whether this was sufficient, or whether an express renunciation should be exacted from England.

Grattan argued that the principle of dependence was embodied in the declaratory Act, and therefore that its repeal was a resignation of the pretended right; that when a man of honour affirms that he possesses a certain power, and afterwards solemnly retracts his declaration, it is equivalent to a distinct disavowal, and that the same laws of honour apply to nations and to individuals; that

* The following is Bacon's account of its origin and nature:—"Poyning, the better to make compensation of the meagreness of his services in the wars by acts of peace, called a Parliament, when was made that memorable act which at this day is called Poyning's Law, whereby all the statutes of England were made to be of force in Ireland, for before they were not; neither are any now in force in Ireland which were made since that time, which was the eighteenth year of the king."—*History of Henry VII.*

to require an express renunciation from England, would be to exhibit a distrustful and an overbearing spirit, a desire to humiliate and to insult her in her adversity ; and that it would stultify the Irish Liberals, for it would imply that England actually possessed the right she was called upon to renounce.

To these reasonings it was replied that the declaratory law did not make a right, and that therefore its repeal could not unmake it ; that though Irish Liberals maintained that England had never possessed the right in question, the English Parliament had asserted its authority, and that the repeal of the declaratory Act was not necessarily anything more than the withdrawal of that assertion as a matter of expediency for the present ; that an express renunciation would be a charter of Irish liberties such as no legal quibble could evade ; and that the history of English dealings with Ireland showed but too plainly how necessary it was to leave no loophole or possibility of encroachment. So far we think the arguments decidedly preponderate on the side of Grattan ; but some circumstances that had occurred in England had greatly disturbed the public mind, and made the question very doubtful. Lord Abingdon, in the English House of Lords, had drawn a distinction between a right to internal and a right to external legislation, and had argued that, while England had relinquished the former, she had retained the

latter. An English law with reference to the importation of sugar from St. Domingo had been drawn up in terms that seemed to be applicable to Ireland, and Lord Mansfield had decided an old Irish law case.

The Simple Repeal question was not started by Flood, but it gained its importance chiefly from his adhesion to the party who were yet unsatisfied. He brought forward their arguments with his usual force, and concluded his speech with an appeal of great solemnity, and which bears every mark of earnest feeling. "Were the voice," he said, "with which I now utter this, the last effort of expiring nature; were the accent which conveys it to you the breath that was to waft me to that grave to which we all tend, and to which my footsteps rapidly accelerate, I would go on. I would make my exit by a loud demand for your rights; and I call upon the God of truth and liberty, who has so often favoured you, and who has of late looked down upon you with such a peculiar grace and glory of protection, to continue to you his inspirings, to crown you with the spirit of his completion, and to assist you against the errors of those that are honest, as well as against the machinations of those that are not." Most of the Volunteers, headed by the lawyer corps, whose opinion on such a question naturally carried great weight, supported Flood, and at last Fox brought

forward in England the required renunciatory Act.

It was in the course of this controversy that the famous collision between Flood and Grattan took place. It had been for some time evident to close observers that it must come sooner or later. For several years the friendship between these two great men had been growing colder and colder, and giving way to feelings of hostility. Flood felt keenly the manner in which he had been superseded as leader of the Liberals. He could not reconcile himself to occupying a second place to a man so much younger than himself, after having been for so long a period the most conspicuous character in the country. The particular subject of the independence of Parliament he had brought forward again and again when Grattan was a mere boy, and it seemed hard that another should reap the glory of his long and thankless labour. Grattan, on the other hand, regarded Flood's adhesion to the Harcourt administration as an act of apostacy, and his agitation of Simple Repeal as a struggle for a personal triumph at the expense of the interests of the country. He dreaded the permanence of the Volunteer convention, the increase of the ill feeling existing between the two countries, and a needless and dangerous agitation of the public mind. Ill health and the position he had so long held had given Flood a some-

what authoritative and petulant tone, which contrasted remarkably with his urbanity in private life, and frequently irritated those with whom he came in contact in Parliament.

Under these circumstances it needed but little to produce an explosion, and that little was supplied by a singularly discourteous and unfair allusion to Flood's illness which escaped from Grattan in the heat of the debate. Flood rose indignantly, and, after a few words of preface, launched into a fierce diatribe against his opponent. His task was a difficult one, for few men presented a more unassassable character. Invective, however, was the custom of the time, and invective between good and great men is necessarily preposterously unjust. He dwelt with bitter emphasis on the grant the Parliament had made to Grattan. He described him as "that mendicant patriot who was bought by his country, and sold that country for prompt payment;" and he dilated with withering sarcasm upon the decline of his popularity. He concluded, in a somewhat exultant tone: "Permit me to say, that if the honourable gentleman often provokes such contests as this, he will have but little to boast of at the end of the session." Grattan, however, was not unprepared. He had long foreseen the collision, and had embodied all his angry feelings in one elaborate speech. Employing the common artifice of an imaginary character, he painted the whole career

of his opponent in the blackest colours, condensed in a few masterly sentences all the charges that had ever been brought against him, and sat down, having delivered an invective which, for concentrated and crushing power, is, we believe, wholly unrivalled in modern oratory.

Thus terminated the friendship between two men who had done more than any who were then living for their country, who had known each other for twenty years, and whose lives are imperishably associated in history. Flood afterwards presided at a meeting of the Volunteers, where a resolution complimentary to Grattan was passed; Grattan, in his pamphlet on the Union, and more than once in private conversation, gave noble testimony to the greatness of Flood; but they were never reconciled again, and their cordial co-operation, which was of such inestimable importance to the country, was henceforth almost an impossibility. We gladly let the curtain fall upon the scene. We can only repeat that invective was the custom of the time and of the country, and that it was scarcely possible to abstain from it without retiring from politics, or forfeiting all influence in the country.

The dissension between the Parliament and the Volunteers had now become very marked, and it was evident that there existed among the latter a party who desired open war with England. It is curious that their leader should have been by

birth an Englishman and by position a bishop. The Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry was said to have been a man of much learning and much talent—a patron of art,* and an ardent lover of his adopted country; but with an excessive passion for popularity. Barrington gives us the following curious and very characteristic picture of his ordinary costume: “He appeared always dressed with peculiar care and neatness, generally entirely in purple, and he wore diamond knee and shoe buckles; but what I most observed was, that he wore white gloves with gold fringe round the wrists, and large gold tassels hanging from them.” The ostentation he manifested in his dress he displayed in every part of his public life. On one occasion he drove in royal state to a great meeting which was held at the Rotunda, escorted by a body of the Volunteers, who sounded their trumpets as they passed the Parliament House, much to the astonishment of the assembled members.

The proceedings of the Volunteers created much alarm in many minds, and strong wishes were felt for the dissolution of the Convention. For

* There is an engraving of one of Albano's flesh-paintings—Actæon discovering Diana and her nymphs just emerging from the bath—an engraving of such a nature that it might almost come under the provisions of Lord Campbell's Act—dedicated to “the Earl of Bristol and Lord Bishop of Derry.” Underneath are the Bishop's arms, surmounted by the mitre, and a little below the mitre the Bishop's motto—“Je ne l'oublierai jamais.”

this measure, however, Charlemont and Flood were not prepared. Flood seems to have perceived that two great dangers menaced the independence of the Parliament—that it might be evaded by a legal quibble, and that it might be betrayed by the corruption of its members. By obtaining from England a distinct renunciation of all supremacy, he had provided effectually against the first of these dangers. By reforming the Parliament, he sought to guard against the latter. Had he succeeded in effecting the reform he meditated, he would have placed the liberties of Ireland on the broad basis of the people's will; he would have fortified and completed the glorious work that he had himself begun; and he would have averted a series of calamities which have not even yet spent their force. We should then never have known the long night of corruption that overcast the splendour of Irish liberty; the blood of '98 would never have flowed; the Legislative Union, with all its attendant evils, would never have been consummated; or if there had been a Union, it would have been effected by the will of the people, and not by the treachery of its representatives; it would have inaugurated an era of peace, instead of perpetuating discord and hatred.

It was, in truth, a night of momentous importance to the country when Flood brought forward in Parliament the Volunteer Reform Bill, and the crowded benches and the anxious faces

that surrounded him showed how fully the magnitude of the struggle was appreciated. The elation of recovered popularity and the proud consciousness of the grandeur of his position, dispelled the clouds that had so long hung over his mind, and imparted a glow to his eloquence worthy of his brightest days. He had too much tact even to mention the Volunteers in his opening speech : but the uniform he wore, the fire of his eye, and the almost regal majesty of his tone and of his gesture, reminded all who heard him of the source of his inspiration. He was opposed by Yelverton, the Attorney-General. Yelverton was at all times a powerful speaker, but on this night he seems to have made his greatest effort. He called upon the House to reject the Bill without even examining its intrinsic merits, as coming from the emissaries of an armed body ; he denounced it as an insult and a menace, as a manifest infringement of the privileges of Parliament ; and he appealed to all parties to rally round the liberties of their country, so lately rescued from English domination, and now threatened by a military council. Flood, in his reply, rested—perhaps rather disingenuously—on his not having spoken of the Volunteers. He had not mentioned them, but if they were attacked he was prepared to support them ; and then he digressed, with the adroitness of a practised debater, into their defence. He reminded his hearers how much they owed to that

body ; how the Volunteers had emancipated their trade and struck off their chains ; how absurd, how ungrateful it would be to assail their deliverers as enemies, and to brand them as hostile to liberty. Yet it was not for the Volunteers that he asked reform ; he would rather place the question on its own merits. " We come to you," he said, " as members of this House ; in that capacity we present you with a Reform Bill. Will you receive it from us ? "

He was, however, but feebly supported and strongly opposed. Those who dreaded reform on personal grounds were doubtless glad of a plausible pretext for opposing it, while others believed that the Convention was the most pressing danger, and a majority, actuated by various motives, rejected the Bill. A resolution to the effect that the dignity of the House required asserting, which was tantamount to a censure of the Volunteers, was then moved and carried. Grattan voted silently with Flood on the reform question, and against him on the subsequent resolution. Lord Charlemont adjourned the Convention *sine die*, and its members separated with an alacrity and a submission that furnished the most eloquent refutation of the charges of their opponents.

The career of Flood in the Irish Parliament was now rapidly drawing to a close. On the following year he made another effort to induce the House to reform its constitution ; but, as he was doubtless

well aware, such an attempt, when opposed by the Government and unsupported by the Volunteers, was at that time almost hopeless. The Reform Bill was rejected, and Flood shortly after put into execution a design that he had conceived many years before, of entering the Parliament of England. His failure there is well known. His habits had been already formed for an Irish audience, and as Grattan said of him, "He was an oak of the forest too great and too old to be transplanted at fifty." He was also guilty of much imprudence. Desiring to act in the most independent manner, he bought a borough seat, and proclaimed openly that he would not identify himself with either of the great parties in Parliament. He thus prejudiced both sides of the House against him, for an independent member was then almost unknown, and deprived himself of that support which is of such great consequence to a debater. He spoke first on an Indian question. It was a subject about which he knew very little; but he rose, as a practised speaker often does, to make a few remarks in a conversational tone, to detect some flaw in a preceding speaker's argument, or to throw light upon some particular section of the subject, without intending to make an elaborate speech, or to review the entire question. Immediately from the lobbies and the coffee-room the members came crowding in, anxious to hear a speaker of whom such great expectations were

entertained. He seems to have thought that it would be disrespectful to those members to sit down at once, so he continued extempore, and soon showed his little knowledge of the subject. When he concluded there was a universal feeling of disappointment. A member named Courtenay rose, and completed his discomfiture by a most virulent and satirical attack. It is hardly necessary to say that Courtenay was an Irishman. He confessed afterwards to Lord Byron that he had been actuated by a personal motive.*

After this failure Flood scarcely ever spoke again. Once, however, his genius shone out with something of its old brilliancy in bringing forward a Reform Bill. His speech on that occasion was very much admired by all parties. Burke said that he had retrieved his reputation. Fox declared that his proposition was the best that had been proposed, and Pitt stated that nothing but the disturbed state of public affairs prevented him from adopting it. It is to be hoped that these praises

* Wraxall, speaking of Flood's failure, says:—"The slow, measured, and sententious style of enunciation which characterised his eloquence, however calculated to excite admiration it might be in the senate of the sister kingdom, appeared to English ears cold, stiff, and deficient in some of the best recommendations to attention." We certainly should not have imagined that "slow, measured, and sententious" were the epithets most applicable to popular Irish oratory, or that fire and animation were especial characteristics of English speakers.

in some degree soothed his mind, which must have been bitterly mortified by the disappointment of his ambition. In his reply upon this question, when answering some charge that had been brought against him, he alluded in a very touching manner to the isolation of his position. "I appeal to you," he said, "whether my conduct has been that of an advocate or an agitator; whether I have often trespassed upon your attention; whether ever except on a question of importance; and whether I then wearied you with ostentation or prolixity. I am as independent in fortune and nature as the honourable member himself. I have no fear but that of doing wrong, nor have I a hope on the subject but that of doing some service before I die. The accident of my situation has not made me a partizan; and I never lamented that situation till now that I find myself as unprotected as I fear the people of England will be on this occasion." After this he only made one other speech, on the French treaty, of any importance. He died in 1791.

When he felt death approaching he requested his attendant to leave the room, and he drew his last breath alone. Faithful to the end to the interests of his country, he left an estate of 5000*l.* a year to the Dublin University, chiefly for the encouragement of the study of Irish, and for the purchase of Irish manuscripts.

There is to our mind something inexpressibly

melancholy in the life of this man. From his earliest youth his ambition seems to have been to identify himself with the freedom of his country. But though he attained to a position which, before him, had been unknown in Ireland; though the unanimous verdict of his contemporaries pronounced him to be one of the greatest intellects that ever adorned the Irish Parliament; and though there is not a single act of his life which may not be construed in a sense perfectly in harmony with honour and with patriotism, yet his career presents one long series of disappointments and reverses. He lived to taste the impotence of age without the reverence that accompanies it. The party that he had formed discarded him as their leader. The reputation that he so dearly prized was clouded and assailed: the principles that he had sown germinated and fructified indeed, but others reaped their fruit, and he is now scarcely remembered except as the object of a powerful invective in Ireland, and as an example of a deplorable failure in England. A few pages of oratory which probably at best only represent the substance of his speeches, a few youthful poems, a few laboured letters, and a biography so meagre and so unsatisfactory that it scarcely gives us any insight into his character, are all that remain of Henry Flood. The period in which he lived, and two or three lamentable mistakes that he committed, were fatal to his reputation,

and he laboured for a land where each party is too intent upon blackening the characters of living Irishmen, to bestow any thought upon the achievements and the virtues of the dead. We may say of him as Grattan said of Kirwan,—“ The curse of Swift was upon him, to have been born an Irishman and a man of genius, and to have used his talents for his country’s good.”

HENRY GRATTAN.

A PAPER was found in Swift's desk after his death containing a list of his friends, classified as grateful, ungrateful, and indifferent. In this list the name of Grattan occurs three times, and each time it is marked as grateful. The family was one of some weight in the country, and the father of the subject of our present sketch was Recorder and Member for Dublin. As we have already had occasion to observe, Dr. Lucas was his colleague and his opponent, and a bitter animosity, both personal and political, subsisted between them. The Recorder seems to have been a man of a violent and overbearing temper, firmly wedded to his own opinions, and exceedingly intolerant of contradiction. He was greatly exasperated with his son for adopting liberal politics, and he carried his resentment so far as to mark his displeasure in his will. HENRY GRATTAN was born in the year 1746. From his earliest youth he manifested the activity of his intellect, and the force and energy of his character. Some foolish nursery tales having produced in his mind those superstitious

fears that are so common among children, he determined, when a mere boy, to emancipate himself from their control, and was accustomed to go at midnight into a churchyard near his father's house, where he remained till every qualm of terror had subsided. At the University he distinguished himself greatly, and acquired a passion for the classics, and especially for the great orators of antiquity, that never deserted him through life. Long before he obtained a seat in Parliament he had begun to cultivate eloquence. His especial models were Bolingbroke and Junius, and his method was constant recitation. He learnt by heart certain passages of his speeches, and continually revolved them in his mind, till he had eliminated all those almost imperceptible prolixities that exist in nearly every written composition. By this means he brought his sentences to a degree of nervousness and of condensation, of purity, and of melody, that is scarcely paralleled in oratory. Several anecdotes are told of the difficulties into which his passion for recitation brought him. On one occasion his landlady in England requested his friends to remove that mad young gentleman who was always talking to himself, or addressing an imaginary person called Mr. Speaker. On another, when apostrophizing a gibbet in Windsor Forest, he was interrupted by a tap on the shoulder, and a curious inquiry as to how he had got down. His letters written at this

time show that he was subject to violent fits of despondency, and they betray also a morbidness that is singularly unlike his character in after years. Shortly after leaving the University he was called to the bar, and resided for some time in the Temple, where he probably occupied himself much more in the study of oratory than of law. He had obtained access to the House of Lords, and had come completely under the spell of Lord Chatham's eloquence. He wrote an elaborate character of Chatham, which was inserted in 'Baritariana,' and in a letter written some years later he gives a long and very minute description of his style of speaking. The following extract will be read with pleasure, as forming, perhaps, the most vivid extant description of the most effective of British orators:—"He was very great, but very odd; he spoke in a style of conversation; not, however, what I expected. It was not a speech, for he never came with a prepared harangue. His style was not regular oratory, like Cicero or Demosthenes, but it was very fine and very elevated, and above the ordinary subjects of discourse Lord Mansfield, perhaps, would have argued the case better; Charles Townshend would have made a better speech; but there was in Lord Chatham a grandeur and a manner which neither had, and which was peculiar to him. What Cicero says in his 'Claris Oratoribus' exactly applies:—'Formæ dignitas, corporis mo-

tas, plenus et artis et venustatis, vocis et suavitas et magnitudo.' His gesture was always graceful. He was an incomparable actor : had it not been so he would have appeared ridiculous. His address to the tapestry and to Lord Effingham's memory required an incomparable actor, and he was that actor. His tones were remarkably pleasing. I recollect his pronouncing one word—effete—in a soft, charming accent. His son could not have pronounced it better. He was often called to order. On one occasion he said, 'I hope some dreadful calamity will befall the country that will open the eyes of the King ;' and then he introduced the allusion to the figure drawing the curtains of Priam, and gave the quotation. He was called to order. He stopped and said, 'What I have spoken I have spoken conditionally, but now I retract the condition. I speak absolutely, and I do hope that some signal calamity will befall the country ;' and he repeated what he had said. He then fired and oratorized, and grew extremely eloquent. Ministers, seeing what a difficult character they had to deal with, thought it best to let him proceed. On one occasion, addressing Lord Mansfield, he said, 'Who are the evil advisers of His Majesty ? I would say to them, Is it you ? is it you ? is it you ?' (pointing to the ministers, until he came near Lord Mansfield). There were several lords round him, and Lord Chatham said, 'My Lords, please to take your seats.' When

they had sat down, he pointed to Lord Mansfield and said, 'Is it you? Methinks Felix trembles.' It required a great actor to do this. Done by any one else it would have been miserable. . . . When he came to the argumentative part of his speech he lowered his tone, so as to be scarcely audible; and he did not lay so much stress on those parts as on the great bursts of genius and the sublime passages. He had studied action, and his gesture was graceful, and had a most powerful effect. His speeches required good acting, and he gave it to them. Their impression was great. His manner was dramatic. In this it was said that he was too much of a mountebank, but, if so, it was a great mountebank. Perhaps he was not so good a debater as his son, but he was a much better orator, a better scholar, and a far greater man. Great subjects, great empires, great characters, effulgent ideas, and classical illustrations, formed the material of his speeches."

It is curious that one who was so sensible to the advantages of a graceful delivery in others, should have been always remarkable for the extreme singularity and awkwardness of his own. Byron, who otherwise admired his speaking exceedingly, called it a "harlequin manner." *

* This was in prose. In his poetry he described Grattan as

"With all that Demosthenes wanted endowed,
And his rival or victor in all he possessed."

The Irish Avatar.

O'Connell said that he nearly swept the ground with his gestures, and the motion of his arms has been compared to the rolling of a ship in a heavy swell.

While the genius of Chatham had stimulated the ambition of Grattan to the highest degree, the friendship of Flood was directing his enthusiasm in the channel of Irish politics. These two men, afterwards such bitter rivals, were at first the most devoted friends; and the experience and the counsel of Flood had undoubtedly a great influence in moulding the character of Grattan. They declaimed together, they acted together in private theatricals, they wrote together in 'Baritariana,' and they discussed together the prospects of their party.

In 1775 Lord Charlemont brought Grattan into Parliament. The circumstances were, in some respects, very favourable for the display of his genius, for the liberal party had lost its leader, and there was no one to assert its principles with effect. Grattan cannot with any justice be accused of having supplanted Flood. He simply occupied the position which was vacant, and which his extraordinary eloquence naturally gave him. Whatever opinion might be entertained among his hearers of the truth of his political views, or of the sagacity of his judgment, there could be no question that he was from the very commencement of his career by far the greatest orator of the

day. When, therefore, his party found themselves deserted by their old leader, they naturally rallied around the one man whose abilities were sufficient to supply his place.

The eloquence of Grattan was, perhaps, on the whole, the finest that had arisen in either country since the days of Chatham. Fox and Sheridan had an equal power of swaying the audiences they addressed, and Burke of sowing his speeches with profound aphorisms; but Fox and Sheridan have scarcely left a sentence behind them, and Burke addressed empty benches or wearied audiences. It was left for Grattan to be profound while he was fascinating, and pointed while he was profound. His thoughts naturally crystallized into epigram. His arguments were condensed with such admirable clearness, that they assumed almost the appearance of axioms; his principles were so ingeniously applied, and so felicitously expressed, that his speeches have all the value of philosophical dissertations and all the charm of brilliant declamation. With the single exception of Burke, we believe no modern orator has left so many profound political maxims; and unlike those of Burke they were always welcomed at the first, for they were always pointed and apposite. Even in his extempore replies his arguments were thrown into an epigrammatical form; the most transient questions were reduced to eternal principles, and the most abstruse subjects became lumi-

nous beneath his touch. This power of giving to passing topics an enduring value, and of applying general principles to every contingency, is, perhaps, one of the highest, as it is one of the rarest, of human attainments. Grattan possessed it, even to a fault. His composition is frequently over-loaded with epigram. There are pages of his speeches which might be almost disintegrated and regarded as a collection of political proverbs. His sentences have sometimes rather the relation of juxtaposition than of cohesion, and while each is in itself nervous and melodious, they do not, when combined, possess the rhythm and cadence, the easy and unembarrassed flow, that we admire in Plunket or in Curran.

This defect, however, was amply compensated for by the many sentences of concentrated argument and imagination, by the noble sentiments and the glowing periods which he continually uttered, and which lingered long upon the popular mind. O'Connell, comparing him to Pitt, said that he wanted the sustained dignity of that speaker; but that Pitt's speeches were always speedily forgotten, while Grattan was constantly saying things that were remembered. He was almost unrivalled in invective, in delineations of character, and in brief, keen arguments. In carrying on trains of sustained reasoning he was not so happy. Flood is said to have been his superior, and none of his speeches are in this respect

comparable to that of Fox on the Westminster scrutiny. The merits of his style would have been, perhaps, more conspicuous in the present day than at any other. The power of invective is indeed now almost useless, and sarcasm, which has superseded it, he does not appear to have possessed; but, on the other hand, the reporter's pen would have concealed most of his defects and have magnified most of his merits. The political orator now speaks less to those who are assembled within the walls of Parliament than to the public outside. The charm of manner and the music of the modulated tone, have lost their old supremacy, and the speaker is thrown more upon the cultivation of language and of condensation, which can never cease to move. He who can furnish the watchwords of party, the epigrams of debate, will now exercise the greatest and most abiding influence. A hundred pens will reproduce his words and circulate them through the country, and they will be repeated as proverbs when the most brilliant displays of diffusive rhetoric are forgotten.

One of the great secrets of Grattan's influence, was the fervid and enthusiastic nature that appeared in every action of his life. It is very curious to observe the effect of such a nature upon the intellect, and how frequently for want of it men of the highest endowments are almost impotent. Many persons believe that Plunket pos-

sesed equal, if not superior, oratorical powers to Grattan ; but Plunket never exercised even a perceptible influence upon public opinion, while Grattan formed the character of the nation. From the very beginning of his career his eloquence seems to have been the great vivifying principle in the Liberal party, and every question received a new impulse from his advocacy.

We have already enumerated the principal objects of the party with which Grattan was connected. He assisted Burgh and Flood in carrying the free-trade question to a triumphant issue. He endeavoured, though unsuccessfully, to place the Irish army under the control of the Parliament ; and in April, 1780, he moved "that no person on earth, save the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, had a right to make laws for Ireland." This motion he introduced with a speech of splendid eloquence, and the effect produced by it was very great. Flood, however, perceived that it was somewhat premature and would have been defeated, and at his suggestion it was withdrawn. This debate had a considerable effect in eliciting the feelings of the people, and the sentiments of the Parliament are sufficiently shown by the letters of Lord Buckingham, who was then viceroy, to the Government in England. "It is with the utmost concern," he wrote, "I must acquaint your Lordship that although so many gentlemen expressed their concern that the subject had been

introduced, the sense of the House against the obligation of any statutes of the Parliament of Great Britain within this kingdom is represented to me to have been almost unanimous." Shortly after this debate the Volunteer Convention assembled at Dungannon to throw their influence into the scale of liberty. Grattan, in co-operation with Flood and Charlemont, drew up a series of resolutions, which were adopted unanimously, asserting the Irish independence; and Grattan, alone, drew up another resolution expressing the gratification with which the Volunteers had witnessed the relaxation of the penal code. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of this last resolution. It marked the solemn union between the two great sections of Irishmen for the purpose of obtaining the recognition of their country's rights. It showed that the old policy of governing Ireland by the division of her sects had failed; and that if the independence of Parliament were to be withheld, it must be withheld in opposition to a nation who were united and in arms.

The Government at length yielded. The Duke of Portland was sent over as Lord Lieutenant, with permission to concede the required boon. At the last moment an effort was made to procure a delay, but Grattan refused to grant it; and on the 16th of April, 1782, amid an outburst of almost unparalleled enthusiasm, the declaration of independence was brought forward. On that day a

large body of the Volunteers were drawn up in front of the old Parliament House of Ireland. Far as the eye could stretch the morning sun glanced upon their weapons and upon their flags ; and it was through their parted ranks that Grattan passed to move the emancipation of his country. Never had a great orator a nobler or a more pleasing task. It was to proclaim that the strife of six centuries had terminated ; that the cause for which so much blood had been shed, and so much genius expended in vain, had at last triumphed ; that loyalty to the crown was no longer treason to the people ; and that a new era had dawned upon Ireland. Doubtless on that day many minds reverted to the long night that had passed, to the carnage and the rapine, the devastation and the dissensions, the despondencies and the disappointments through which Ireland had struggled towards that conception which had been as the pillar of fire on her path. But now at last the promised land was reached. The dream of Swift and of Molyneux was realized. The blessings of independence were reconciled with the blessings of connection ; and in an emancipated Parliament the patriot saw the guarantee of the future prosperity of his country and the Shekinah of liberty in the land. There was, it is true, much still to be done ; there were disqualifications to be removed, anomalies to be rectified, corruption to be overcome, but Ireland possessed

the vital force necessary for all this. The progress of education and of public opinion would regenerate and reform the Irish Parliament as it regenerated and reformed the Parliament of England; and every year the sense of independence would quicken the sympathy between the people and their representatives. It was indeed a noble triumph, and the orator was worthy of the cause. In a few glowing sentences he painted the dreary struggle that had passed, the magnitude of the victory that had been achieved, and the grandeur of the prospects that were unfolding. "I am now," he exclaimed, "to address a free people. Ages have passed away, and this is the first moment in which you could be distinguished by that appellation. I have spoken on the subject of your liberty so often that I have nothing to add, and have only to admire by what heaven-directed steps you have proceeded until the whole faculty of the nation is braced up to the act of her own deliverance. I found Ireland on her knees; I watched over her with a paternal solicitude; I have traced her progress from injuries to arms, and from arms to liberty. Spirit of Swift, spirit of Molyneux, your genius has prevailed! Ireland is now a nation. In that character I hail her, and bowing in her august presence I say *esto perpetua!*"

Immediately after the concession of independence a day of thanksgiving was appointed to consecrate the triumph, and a vote for the support

of twenty thousand sailors for the English navy was agreed upon. This last was almost the first measure of the emancipated Parliament. Grattan was anxious to show in the most unequivocal manner the sympathy of Ireland with England, and the compatibility of an ardent love of independence with a devoted attachment to the connection. He said himself, "I am desirous above all things, next to the liberty of the country, not to accustom the Irish mind to an alien or suspicious habit with regard to Great Britain."

While the greatest Irishmen in Ireland were thus working out the freedom of their country, the greatest Irishman in England wrote to encourage them and to express his approval of the work. "I am convinced," wrote Burke to Lord Charlemont, "that no reluctant tie can be a strong one, and that a natural, cheerful alliance will be a far more secure link of connection than any principle of subordination borne with grudging and discontent." Happy would it have been if these words had been remembered when the Union was imposed upon a prostrate and unwilling nation! Happy had those men been listened to who predicted that no legislative or commercial benefits could compensate for the alienation of the affections of the people!

The Parliament at this time determined to mark its recognition of the services of Grattan by a grant of 100,000*l.* Grattan, however, refused to receive so large a sum, and was with some diffi-

culty induced to accept half. This grant enabled him to devote himself exclusively to the service of the country without practising at the bar, to which he had been called.

We need not revert at length to the question of Simple Repeal, which we have already so fully considered. The arguments on each side of that controversy must be admitted to have been very nicely balanced, and the authorities were also very evenly divided. Grattan reckoned among the supporters of his view Charlemont, Fox, the Irish chief justices and chief baron, and several other Irish legal authorities. He had, however, injured his cause greatly by bringing forward a resolution declaring that all who asserted that England had authority over Ireland were enemies to the country; a resolution which was wholly indefensible, which Flood most triumphantly assailed, and which, after a short discussion, was withdrawn. After this famous invective the two rivals co-operated successfully in opposing some commercial arrangements known as Orde's Propositions, which were brought forward in 1785, and which were supposed to trench upon the independence of Ireland.

In December, 1783, Pitt's ministry began. From that time the influence of the Government appears to have been almost uniformly employed in opposing the efforts that were made to reform the Parliament. One of the great causes

of complaint was the Pension List. The enormity of the grievance is sufficiently shown by the single fact that the money spent in pensions in Ireland was not merely relatively, but absolutely, greater than was expended for that purpose in England. Repeated efforts were made to reduce this list, which was so detrimental to the disordered finances of the country, and so fatal to the purity of Parliament. Grattan brought forward the subject in 1785 and in 1791, but on both occasions Government threw their influence into the opposite scale, and he was defeated. In 1789 Grattan disagreed with Pitt's ministry on the Regency question, and maintained with Fox that the madness of the King was to be regarded as tantamount to his death; and that while it lasted his son rightfully possessed the full powers of royalty. The Irish Parliament adopted this view, and there was some danger of a serious collision with England, when the recovery of the King solved the difficulty. But the great question which at that time agitated the public mind of England was the position of the Roman Catholics; a question which has long been, and still continues to be, the most fertile cause of dissension and controversy in Ireland.

There are few more curious pages in ecclesiastical history than that which records the various phases of Christianity in Ireland. Its first introduction is lost in the obscurity of antiquity, but

we find it existing, though in a very feeble condition, in the middle of the fifth century, when Palladius and St. Patrick came over to reanimate it. Palladius was sent from Rome by Pope Celestine; his mission was wholly unsuccessful, and he very soon left Ireland. From what quarter St. Patrick derived his authority is a question which is still fiercely debated between the members of the rival creeds. It seems plain that under his auspices Christianity spread over the entire island; that the Church continued for several centuries in a most flourishing condition; that it existed wholly independently of Rome; and that in the famous Easter controversy it warmly upheld the Oriental opinion.

The Irish monasteries soon became famed for the piety and the learning that emanated from them, and many pilgrims from many lands sought instruction within their walls. Amongst others Oswald, the son of the King of Northumbria, was educated and converted to Christianity by the Irish monks; and, when he came to the throne, he invited his old preceptors to plant a mission in his dominions, and established the monastery of Lindisfarne. It was the rare fortune of the monks of Lindisfarne to have three successive priors who were so stainless in their character, so winning in their manners, and so gentle in their controversies, that they prepossessed all who knew them in behalf of their religion, and extorted expressions of

the warmest admiration even from an historian* who was an opponent of their views. Their zeal was equal to their gentleness, and their success to their deserts, and by their means the light of Christianity was spread over nearly the whole of the north of England. At last, however, they came into collision with the Roman party on the Easter question; and the genius and the energy of Wilfrid, the Roman champion, having gained the victory, they returned to their own country. In Ireland the Pope obtained a certain influence amid the civil wars that distracted the land, but his authority was never generally recognised till the English invasion. The English King having obtained letters from two successive Pontiffs conferring Ireland upon him, on account of its separation from the See of Rome, and on condition of the payment of Peter's pence, convened a council at Cashel, which formally imposed the Roman yoke on the nation from which England had received a Christianity separate from Rome.

If we overleap the next few centuries, we find that at the time of the Reformation Ireland was the only northern country in which the Reformed tenets never made way. The explanation of this phenomenon is beyond all question to be found in the policy of England. The Irish regarded Protestantism as identified with a nation which was the object of their deepest abhorrence. Elizabeth,

* Bede.

who was its great representative, had spread desolation and disaster over the greatest part of their land. She had shown herself anxious to propagate the Reformed faith, but still more anxious to eradicate the nationality of Ireland. To effect the former object she enjoined that the Anglican service should everywhere be celebrated ; to effect the latter she forbade its being celebrated in the Irish tongue. Where the people could not understand English, it was gravely ordered that the service might be translated into Latin. The consequence was what might have been anticipated. The bishops, indeed, with two exceptions, became Protestants ; but as those two were immediately ejected, the rapid conversion was not very inexplicable or very influential. The people continued in their old faith, and England was thus the means of consolidating and perpetuating that religion which has ever proved the most insuperable obstacle to her policy.

The next great representative of Protestantism in England was Cromwell, whose Irish policy is well known. Mr. Carlyle has discovered a transcendent, and even religious, grandeur in the massacres of Drogheda and of Wexford, but it must be admitted that they were not calculated to possess the Irish mind in favour of Protestantism. We may observe, too, that the Puritans acted throughout as religionists. Every soldier was an ardent theologian, and never more

so than when, with a text from Joshua in his mouth, he was hewing the misbelievers to the ground. The war of races and the recollection of the Irish massacre seem to have all given way to the fierce hatred of the Man of Sin, that had steeled every heart and had whetted every sword. Had Cromwell's policy been persisted in for a few generations, Roman Catholicism in Ireland might have perished in blood ; but, as it was, it only deepened the chasm between the two religions, and inspired the Roman Catholics with a still more intense hatred of the dominant creed.

The last great Protestant ruler of England was William III., who is identified in Ireland with the humiliation of the Boyne and with the broken treaty of Limerick. The ceaseless exertions of the extreme Protestant party have made him more odious in the eyes of the people than he deserves to be, for the penal code was chiefly the work of his successors. It required, indeed, two or three reigns to elaborate a system so ingeniously contrived to injure, to insult, and to impoverish the people of Ireland. By this code the Roman Catholics were excluded from the Parliament, from the magistracy, and from the bar ; they could not vote at elections or vestries ; they could not act as constables, as sheriffs, or as jurymen ; they were debarred from every means of educating their children, from sending them to the university, from acting as schoolmasters, as ushers, or as

private tutors ; they could not marry Protestants, or purchase " manors, tenements, hereditaments," or life-annuities. Except in the linen trade, they could not have more than two apprentices. In case of war with a Roman Catholic Power, they were to reimburse the damage done by the enemy's privateers ; they were to pay double towards the support of the militia ; their priests were proscribed, and hunted down ; their children were bribed to forsake them ; the son who apostatised from his father's faith could immediately possess his father's property ; the wife who became Protestant could compel her husband to make over to her a large portion of his income ; and all these enactments were passed, though a solemn treaty had guaranteed the Roman Catholics perfect religious liberty, though not a single overt act of treason was proved against them, and though they had remained passive spectators of two convulsions in the north of England, which had menaced the existence of the Protestant ascendancy.

Nothing is more common than to hear Englishmen dilating in reproachful terms upon the cringing and cowering spirit often shown by the lower orders in Ireland, upon their deep-rooted aversion to law, and upon their passion for secret and illegal combinations ; but surely such reproach comes with a bad grace from such a quarter. A nation is always the creature of its past. Few facts are more clearly established than that a period of

oppression will imprint upon a people a character which will continue long after the oppression has been removed. Several generations must pass away before the national mind regains its buoyancy and its healthy vigour, and is thoroughly braced by the atmosphere of freedom. That the character of the Irish poor is still diseased and degraded we fully admit, but it requires no great sagacity to discover to what causes the disease and the degradation are to be ascribed.

The history of the penal laws should furnish a lasting warning to persecutors of all religions. Arthur Young asserts that the numerical proportion of the Roman Catholics in Ireland was not even diminished, if anything the reverse; and that it was admitted, by those who asserted the contrary, that it would take 4000 years, according to the then rate of progress, to convert them. It was stated in Parliament that only 4055 had conformed in 71 years under the system; and what little the religion may have lost in number was gained in intensity. The people of Ireland emerged from their long ordeal, penetrated with an attachment to their religion almost unparalleled in Europe. With the exception of the inhabitants of Bavaria and the Tyrol, there is perhaps no nation in the world whose character has been so completely moulded and permeated by it—none in which the most ultramontane opinions are received with a more implicit acquiescence, or sceptical doubts are more completely unknown.

The code perished at last by its own atrocity. It became after a time almost a dead letter, and the Irish Protestants took the initiative in obtaining its mitigation. In 1768 a bill for this purpose passed without a division in the Irish Parliament, but was lost in England. In 1774, 1778, 1782, and 1792, several Relief Bills became law. By these Acts the Roman Catholics were admitted to most of the privileges of their fellow-subjects, except to political power. They still laboured under three great disqualifications: they could not possess the elective franchise, they could not sit in Parliament, and they could not rise to the higher positions in the legal or the military professions. Public opinion had begun to show itself in their favour. Burke espoused their cause warmly, wrote a petition for them, exerted all his eloquence in their behalf, and sent over his son to assist them. But the man to whom they owed the most was undoubtedly Henry Grattan. He was almost the only Irishman of note who at that time ceaselessly advocated their unqualified emancipation. Flood and Charlemont had a different theory. They believed (and we are not prepared to say that they were wrong) that the admission of the Roman Catholics to political equality would sooner or later prove incompatible with the establishment of the church of the minority; they regarded that establishment as of transcendent importance, and they therefore maintained, that while the Roman Catholics should be admitted to perfect

toleration, they should not be admitted to political power. This distinction Grattan refused to recognise. He argued, that to exclude the great bulk of the people from Parliament on account of their religion was to inflict upon them a positive injury, and to deprive them of all security for their toleration. "Civil and religious liberty," he said in one of his speeches, "depend on political power; the community that has no share directly or indirectly in political power has no security for its political liberty." He supported the establishment, but he made a vigorous effort, in 1788, to substitute some other mode of payment for the tithes, which were chiefly taken from Roman Catholics. He believed also that the difference between the two religions was much exaggerated; that it was continually lessening, and that the process of assimilation would be greatly accelerated by the removal of the religious disabilities. His speeches are full of intimations of this opinion. "Bigotry may survive persecution, but it can never survive toleration." "What Luther did for us philosophy has done in some degree for the Roman Catholics, and their religion has undergone a silent reformation; and both divisions of Christianity, unless they have lost their understanding, must have lost their animosity, though they have retained their distinctions." "It is the error of sects to value themselves more upon their differences than upon their religion."

Among the Roman Catholics themselves, for a considerable time, scarcely any political life had existed. Their spirits were completely cowed by long oppression, and the restrictions on education had prevented the development of their intellect. At last, however, Father O'Leary, a writer of great ability, rose among them. It is impossible to read his works without regretting that an eloquence of such dazzling brilliancy was not exerted more frequently, and on works of greater magnitude. His principal performances are a series of extremely clever letters to Wesley, who had written against the removal of the penal laws, an address to the Roman Catholics inculcating loyalty during the Rebellion of 1745, and a short treatise on the Socinian Controversy. He is now scarcely remembered (except for his well-known answer to a Protestant clergyman, who was dilating on the horrors of purgatory);* but he was in his day, beyond all comparison, the most brilliant writer in Ireland. He was admitted as a member of a convivial society, called "the Monks of the Screw," which was presided over by Curran, and which included all the first men in Ireland. His writings were much read, and Grattan panegyrised him in Parliament.

With this exception, the Roman Catholics seem to have made scarcely any exertion to better their

* "You might go farther and fare worse."

condition until 1792 and 1793, when they formed a convention under a leader, named Keogh, for the purpose of preparing petitions to the King and to the Parliament.

Grattan conducted their cause with great tact. He refused to make it a party question, and by this refusal obtained the assistance of Sir Hercules Langrishe, who was one of the ablest of his political opponents, and left it always open to the Ministers to adopt his views. At last, in 1793, a Relief Bill, admitting the Roman Catholics to the elective franchise, was introduced by the Government, and after a warm debate, was carried. In the course of the discussion Grattan made the following statement of the case :—" The situation of the Roman Catholics is reducible to four propositions. They are, three-fourths of your people paying their proportion of near 2,000,000*l.* of taxes, without any share in the representation or expenditure. They pay your Church establishment without any retribution ; they discharge the active and laborious offices of life, manufacture, husbandry, and commerce, without those franchises which are annexed to the fruits of industry ; and they replenish your armies and navies without commission, rank, or reward. Under these circumstances, and under the further recommendation of total and entire political separation from any foreign prince or pretender, they desire to be admitted to the franchise of the constitution."

While supporting the Government Act Grattan complained greatly of its imperfection. The admission of the Roman Catholics to Parliament was its necessary complement, and by one bold measure the Ministers might have set the question at rest for ever. It has been argued, too, both by Archbishop Whately and by Lord Cloncurry, that if it was the intention of the Government to proceed gradually they should have at least adopted a different order. By admitting the Roman Catholics to Parliament they would have conferred political power on a few of the educated. By giving them the elective franchise they placed it chiefly in the hands of the ignorant. A bill for completing the relief was at this time actually brought forward, but was defeated by Government influence.

The Relief Bill of '93 naturally suggests a consideration of the question so often agitated in Ireland, whether the Union was really a benefit to the Roman Catholic cause. It has been argued that Catholic Emancipation was an impossibility as long as the Irish Parliament lasted; for in a country where the great majority were Roman Catholics, it would be folly to expect the members of the dominant creed to surrender a monopoly on which their ascendancy depended. The arguments against this view are, we think, overwhelming. The injustice of the disqualification was far more striking before the Union than after it. In

the one case the Roman Catholics were excluded from the Parliament of a nation of which they were the great majority; in the other they were excluded from the Parliament of an empire in which they were a small minority. Grattan and Plunket were the two great supporters of Catholic Emancipation, and the two great opponents of the Union. Clare and Duigenan were the two great opponents of Emancipation, and the two great supporters of the Union. At a time when scarcely any public opinion existed in Ireland, when the press had hardly been called into existence, when the Roman Catholics were absolutely quiescent, and when the Government was almost uniformly hostile to Emancipation, the Irish Protestants voluntarily admitted their fellow-subjects to the magistracy, to the jury-box, and to the franchise. By this last measure they gave them an amount of political power which necessarily implied complete emancipation. Even if no leader of genius had risen in the Roman Catholic ranks, and if no spirit of enthusiasm had animated their councils, the influence possessed by a body who formed three-fourths of the population, who were rapidly rising in wealth, and who could send their representatives to Parliament, would have been sufficient to ensure their triumph. If the Irish Legislature had continued it would have been found impossible to resist the demand for reform; and every reform, by diminishing the

overgrown power of a few Protestant landholders, would have increased that of the Roman Catholics. The concession accorded in 1793 was, in fact, far greater and more important than that accorded in 1829, and it placed the Roman Catholics, in a great measure, above the mercy of Protestants. But this was not all. The sympathies of the Protestants were being rapidly enlisted in their behalf. The generation to which Charlemont and Flood belonged had passed away, and all the leading intellects of the country, almost all the Opposition, and several conspicuous members of the Government, were warmly in favour of Emancipation. The rancour which at present exists between the members of the two creeds appears then to have been almost unknown, and the real obstacle to Emancipation was not the feelings of the people, but the policy of the Government. The Roman Catholics were rapidly gaining the public opinion of Ireland, when the Union arrayed against them another public opinion, which was deeply prejudiced against their faith and almost entirely removed from their influence. Compare the twenty years before the Union with the twenty years that followed it, and the change is sufficiently manifest. There can scarcely be a question that if Lord Fitzwilliam had remained in office the Irish Parliament would have given unrestricted emancipation. There can scarcely be a question that if O'Connell had never arisen, the

English Parliament would never have given Emancipation unqualified by the veto. Year after year Grattan and Plunket brought forward the case of their fellow-countrymen with an eloquence and a perseverance worthy of their great cause; but year after year they were defeated. It was not till the great tribune had arisen, till he had moulded his co-religionists into one compact and threatening mass, and had brought the country to the verge of revolution, that the tardy boon was conceded. Eloquence and argument proved alike unavailing when unaccompanied by menace, and Catholic Emancipation was confessedly granted because to withhold it would be to produce a rebellion.

The refusal of the Government to complete the enfranchisement of the Roman Catholics had a great influence in stimulating disloyalty in the country, but most especially among the Protestants. The conviction that the removal of all religious disabilities was essential to the welfare of Ireland was rapidly gaining ground. In 1782, as we have already seen, the representatives of 143 corps of Volunteers passed a resolution, with but two dissentient voices, expressing their approval of the mitigation of the penal code. In 1792 a petition for Emancipation, signed by 600 Protestant householders of Belfast, was presented to the Parliament. In 1791 the club of United Irishmen had been formed, to advocate the

Catholic claims. This club consisted originally of a number of men, chiefly Protestants, who were under no obligation to secrecy, and who were simply pledged "to promote a union of friendship between Irishmen of every religious persuasion, and to forward a full, fair, and adequate representation of all the people in Parliament." It was presided over by Hamilton Rowan, a Protestant gentleman of large fortune, and a most amiable and chivalrous character; and it was at first of a perfectly loyal character. Grattan was not in any way connected with it, but, like all the Liberals of the time, he was labouring for the attainment of its two great objects—Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform. The latter subject he brought forward, in conjunction with Ponsonby, in 1793. He stated in his speech that less than ninety individuals returned a vast majority of the Parliament, but he was unable to pass his Bill. This defeat gave a still further impetus to the revolutionary movement, which does not appear to have been much retarded by the attainment of one of the old objects of Flood—the permanent reduction of the Pension List to 80,000*l.* a year. It was not merely the anti-liberalism of the Government that produced this movement. The French Revolution, that event compared with which every other change since the Reformation sinks into insignificance, had just burst upon the world. It is difficult for us,

among whom the principles of liberty are now regarded as mere truisms, to realize the transports of enthusiasm and the paroxysms of terror with which that revolution was regarded by friends and foes. The dramatic grandeur of its circumstances, the expansive character it exhibited, the startling boldness of its doctrines and its aspirations, the eloquence, and heroism, and self-devotion, that mingled with and half-redeemed its horrors, had all tended to awaken an almost delirious enthusiasm in Europe. Even in England, though the long-established free institutions and the strong aversion to everything French might have been deemed a sufficient barrier, the Government thought it necessary to put in motion all the long-disused engines of coercion to repress the new opinions. But in Ireland, where the ground-swell of agitation produced by the movement that had terminated in 1782 had not yet subsided, where the memory of the Volunteers was still fresh in every mind, where the traditions of past oppression and the spectacle of present abuses were alienating the people from England, while an affinity of character and an old debt of gratitude were drawing them to France, it is not surprising that the Revolution should have produced a deep and a lasting effect. As we have said, its adherents in Ireland were chiefly Protestants. Wexford was the only county where the rebellion was distinctively Roman Catholic, and even

there Bagenal Harvey, its leader, was a Protestant. Grattan and the Government both perceived the coming storm. The latter, in 1793, brought forward a Bill making those conventions which had hitherto proved the most powerful organs of public opinion, illegal. Grattan, Curran, and Ponsonby, warmly opposed the motion, but without success; and that Convention Act, which afterwards proved one of the greatest obstacles in O'Connell's course, became law. Grattan, on the other hand, urged the Government to grant those reforms by which alone rebellion could be averted, and the people to abstain from that violence which would imperil the existence of their constitution.

Ponsonby's Reform Bill was brought forward again, though without success, in 1794, and Grattan took the occasion to give a distinct outline of his policy. He desired "that Ireland should improve her constitution, correct its abuses, and assimilate it as much as possible to that of Great Britain; that whenever administrations should attempt to act unconstitutionally, but, above all, whenever they should tamper with the independence of Parliament, they should be checked by all means that the constitution justifies; but that these measures and this general plan should be pursued by Ireland with a fixed, steady, and unalterable resolution to stand or fall with Great Britain. Whenever Great Britain, therefore,

should be clearly involved in war, Ireland should grant her a decided and unequivocal support, except that war should be carried on against her own liberty."

At last it seemed as though better counsels had prevailed with the Government. Lord Fitzwilliam, a nobleman who was well known to be a warm supporter of Emancipation, came over as Lord-Lieutenant, and his advent was enthusiastically hailed by all parties. Petitions in favour of Emancipation came pouring in, unprecedented supplies were voted by the Parliament, Grattan, though without any official position, became virtually the leader of the Government; and the French party seemed to have almost disappeared. Grattan obtained leave to bring in an Emancipation Bill, with but three dissentient voices. A Reform Bill was to follow, and the United Irishmen afterwards said that had such a Bill been passed, their quarrel with England would have ended. There does not seem to be a doubt that the revolutionary spirit in the country would have been completely allayed, when Pitt recalled Lord Fitzwilliam and the Rebellion of 1798 became inevitable.

It is difficult to ascertain what were the precise motives to which this recall is to be attributed. It is said that the influence of the Beresford family, who had a feud with Lord Fitzwilliam was one of the chief causes; and it is not im-

possible that the King's antipathy to the Roman Catholics was another. Lord Fitzwilliam demanded explanations in the House of Lords, and was supported by the Duke of Norfolk; but his demand was refused. He entered a protest against this refusal, in which he stated that he found Catholic Emancipation to be ardently desired by the Roman Catholics, to be asked for by very many Protestants, and to be cheerfully acquiesced in by nearly all. He had solemnly warned the ministers that to delay it would be to create a rebellion, and it was in defiance of this warning that he was recalled.

After this event the days of the Irish Parliament were but few and evil. Three or four times Grattan brought forward the Catholic and the Reform questions, but the Government continually refused to yield, and the revolutionary tide surged higher and higher. At last, on the eve of the Rebellion, Grattan gave up his seat in Parliament and retired into private life. He had found it wholly impossible to cope with the Government during that period of panic. He could not sympathise with the party who were appealing to arms, nor yet with those who had driven them to disloyalty. He was guided, too, in a great measure, by the example of Fox, who, when he found his party hopelessly reduced, had retired from the debates; but, unlike Fox, he resigned his seat when he abstained from parliamentary business.

If it were not for the wretched condition of the country, it would have cost him comparatively little to retire from active life ; for he possessed all the resources of happiness that are furnished by a highly cultivated intellect, by the most amiable of dispositions, and the attachment of innumerable friends. All accounts concur in representing him in private life as the simplest and most winning of mortals. His conversation, like his speeches, was tessellated and inlaid with epigrams, anti-theses, and aphorisms, full of curiously minute delineations of character, of original and striking observations, and, at the same time, of touches of the most delicate and laconic humour. With most persons it would have seemed affected, but there was in his manner, and in his very appearance, such a quaint guilelessness, that his peculiarities seemed perfectly natural, and only added to the pungency of his anecdotes. His characteristic feature was an almost childish simplicity with which he could throw his whole energy into the most trivial matters. Curran describes him conducting a controversy about the comparative merits of the pumps of Tinnehinch and the Priory with an intensity of earnestness and a measured gravity worthy of a great political contest. It is a fine saying of Coleridge's, that genius consists of the combination of the matured judgment of the man with the delicacy of feelings and the susceptibility of impressions of the child, and it needs but

little acquaintance with literary biography, to perceive that these last elements almost invariably enter into the composition of really great men. Not a few, like Goldsmith and Shelley, seem never to have exchanged the habits of the boy for those of the man; and even in intellects of a sterner and more robust character, we may almost always detect traits of simplicity, of extreme susceptibility, of childishness, and it may be of weakness, that are strangely at variance with the world around. It seems as though it were scarcely less true of the temple of genius than of the temple of Christianity, that he who would enter in must become as a little child.

It does not fall within the province of the present work to paint the Rebellion of '98. Public opinion had but little scope during a period of military law and of mob violence, and the historians of the two countries may well let the curtain fall over a scene that was equally disgraceful to both. The man who at that time occupied the first position in the public mind was, beyond all question, Curran. Seldom has Ireland produced a patriot of more brilliant and varied talents, and more unblemished in his public life; and among all his contemporaries there is perhaps none to whom we look back with a feeling so much akin to affection. Rising from a position of the deepest humility he early attracted public attention as a poet of no mean promise—a wit of almost the highest order—and an

orator who might compare with the greatest of his countrymen. If his speeches, like those of most lawyers, were somewhat lax and inaccurate in their style, if they do not exhibit great depth of thought or great power of reasoning, they are characterised at least by a musical flow that delights even in an inaccurate and uncorrected report, and by a power of governing the passions that was equalled by none of his contemporaries. A member of a profession where all promotion depended on the Government, and was then given from political motives, he was never guilty of abandoning a principle or swerving from a duty ; he was never induced by blandishments, by bribes, or by menaces, to disguise or to suppress his feelings. At the very beginning of his career he signalized himself by volunteering to defend an old priest who had been maltreated by a Protestant nobleman, and whose cause no other member of the bar was willing to adopt. Lord Clare drove him from the Court of Chancery by continual evidences of dislike. Lord Carleton hinted to him that he might lose his silk gown if he ventured to defend Neilson. During one of his speeches he was interrupted by the clash of the arms of an angry soldiery, and more than once he had to dread those political duels by which dullness so often revenged itself upon genius. In his famous speech for Hamilton Rowan he could adopt almost without alteration the exordium of Cicero's defence of Milo,

but, unlike Cicero, the attempts at intimidation that he described only served to stimulate his eloquence. And yet this man, before whose sarcasm and invective corrupt judges and perjured witnesses so often trembled; this man, on whose burning eloquence crowded and sometimes hostile courts hung breathless with admiration till the shadows of evening had long closed in, was in private life the most affable, the most gentle, the most unassuming of companions. The briefless barrister; the young man making his first essays of ambition; the bashful, the needy, and the disappointed, ever found in him the most cordial of friends, and acknowledged with delight that his wit was wholly untinctured by bitterness and superciliousness, and that his manner was as fascinating as his eloquence.

In Parliament he gave the Liberal party an unwavering and disinterested support. He made his maiden speech in favour of Flood's Reform Bill, and he took part in almost every subsequent effort to purify the Parliament, to emancipate the Catholics, to reduce the Pensions, to ameliorate the Criminal Code, and to prevent the introduction of Military Law. He laboured with especial earnestness, though without success, to assimilate the Law of Treason in Ireland to that of England, by which two witnesses were necessary for a capital conviction; and if he had succeeded he would have prevented some of the most scandalous

scenes that disgraced the subsequent prosecutions. In all the great trials of '98 he was the counsel for the prisoners, and his eloquence proved fully equal to the occasion. His finest effort is his defence of Hamilton Rowan, which has been styled by the first of our oratorical critics,* the most eloquent speech ever delivered at the bar, but which is said to owe a great deal of its pre-eminence to the fact that it was better reported than his other speeches. It was on that occasion that he broke into his eloquent and well-known justification of the principle of "Universal Emancipation," which had been asserted by the United Irishmen, and denounced by the Crown officers as treasonable. "I speak in the spirit of the British law, which makes liberty commensurate with and inseparable from the British soil; which proclaims even to the stranger and the sojourner the moment he sets his foot on British earth, that the ground on which he treads is holy and consecrated by the genius of universal emancipation. No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced—no matter what complexion, incompatible with freedom, an African or an Indian sun may have burnt upon him—no matter in what disastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down—no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of slavery—the

* Lord Brougham, in his defence of Hunt.

first moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain, the altar and the god sink together in the dust; his soul walks abroad in its own majesty; his body swells beyond the measure of his chains that burst from around him, and he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation."

The Rebellion of '98 was at last suppressed, and the Ministers determined to employ the advantages afforded them by military law and the prostration of the spirit of the people to annihilate the Irish Parliament. The notion of a union had been more than once propounded in both countries. As early as 1759 a report was current that such a measure was contemplated, and so unpopular was the project that the Dublin mob had seized a number of the members, and made them swear that they would vote against it. In 1786 we find Charlemont writing to Flood:—"The English papers have lately been infested with the idea of a union, but except from them I know nothing of it; neither can I suppose it possible that such a notion can have entered into the heads of our present Administration. When we had no constitution the idea was scarcely admissible: what then must it be now?" Wilberforce, on one occasion, observed that it would be a good measure, but impracticable, for the people would never consent. Dr. Johnson said to an Irish gentleman, "Do not unite with us: we will unite with you only to

rob you." The Lord-Lieutenant was Lord Cornwallis, in whose published Correspondence we can trace very clearly the progress of the design; but the principal agent of the Government was Lord Castlereagh, the Chief Secretary. It was left to him to superintend the corruption that was necessary to pass the measure, and he discharged one of the most dishonourable commissions ever entrusted to an Irish nobleman, with a courage that shrunk from no pollution and a consistency that was shaken by no remorse. In the November of 1798 we find the following curious notice of this appointment in one of Lord Cornwallis's letters to the Duke of Portland:—"Lord Castlereagh's appointment gave me great satisfaction, and although I admit the propriety of the general rule, yet as he is so very unlike an Irishman, I think he has a great claim to an exception in his favour." In the same month we find Lord Castlereagh writing to Mr. Wickham:—"The principal provincial newspapers have been secured, and every attention will be paid to the press generally." Parnell and Fitzgerald, who refused to acquiesce in the designs of the Government, were dismissed from office; and in 1799, after what was considered a sufficient distribution of bribes and promises,* the measure was introduced.

* The following notice in the Cornwallis Letters concerning Archbishop Agar is amusingly characteristic. It is in a letter from Lord Cornwallis to the Duke of Portland, in

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the whole intellect of the country was opposed to it. Almost the only man of any talent in the Ministerial ranks was Fitzgibbon, who had been made Lord Chancellor, and elevated to the Peerage with the title of Lord Clare. He was an able debater, and a man of great perseverance, but he does not appear to have been ever suspected even by his friends of any patriotic feeling. He had once been considered a Liberal, and he owed his promotion chiefly to Grattan, whom he afterwards attacked with the utmost virulence. He was remarkable for an arrogance and an intensity of hatred that bordered upon insanity, and for the reckless manner in which he displayed his personal antipathies upon the Bench. Grattan once

July, 1797; the italics are our own:—"It was privately intimated to me that the sentiments of the Archbishop of Cashel were less unfriendly to the Union than they had been, on which I took an opportunity of conversing with his Grace on the subject, and, after discussing some preliminary topics respecting the representation of the Spiritual Lords, and the probable *vacancy of the see of Dublin*, he declared his great unwillingness at all times to oppose the measures of the Government, and especially on a point in which his Majesty's feelings were so much interested, to whom he professed the highest sense of gratitude, and concluded by a cordial declaration of friendship." Dr. Agar was made a Viscount in 1800, Archbishop of Dublin in 1801, and Earl of Normanton a few years later. There is a long and extremely eulogistic inscription to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

described him in conversation as “a very dangerous man—to run away from.”

It is greatly to the honour of the lawyers that they were throughout as a body among the most strenuous opponents of the Union, notwithstanding the lavish profusion with which patronage was bestowed upon its supporters. Both by meetings outside the Parliament and in the Parliament, by the eloquence of Plunket, of Burrowes, and of Bushe, they did all that was in their power to prevent it. Plunket exhibited especial eloquence and argumentative power, and denounced the meanness of the transaction in the strongest manner. “I will make bold to say that licentious and impious France, in all the unrestrained excess which anarchy and atheism have given birth to, has not committed a more insidious act against her enemy than is now attempted by the professed champion of the cause of civilized Europe against her friend and ally in the time of her calamity and distress. At the moment when our country is filled with British troops; when the loyal men of Ireland are fatigued and exhausted by their efforts to subdue the Rebellion; efforts in which they had succeeded before those troops arrived; whilst the Habeas Corpus Act is suspended—whilst trials by court-martial are carrying on in many parts of the kingdom—whilst the people are taught to think they have no right to meet or deliberate; and whilst the great body of them are so palsied

by their fears, or worn down by their exertions, that even this vital question is scarcely able to rouse them from their lethargy—at a moment when we are distracted by domestic dissensions—dissensions artfully kept alive as the pretext of our present subjugation and the instrument of our future thralldom.” “For centuries,” said Bushe, “the British Parliament and nation kept you down, shackled your commerce, and paralysed your exertions, despised your characters, and ridiculed your pretensions to any privileges commercial or constitutional. She has never conceded a point to you which she could avoid, nor granted a favour which was not reluctantly distilled. They have been all wrung from her like drops of blood, and you are not in possession of a single blessing (except those which you derived from God) that has not been either purchased or extorted by the virtue of your own Parliament from the illiberality of England.” The language of Saurin was still stronger. “If a legislative union,” he said, “should be so forced upon this country against the will of its inhabitants it would be a nullity, and resistance to it would be a struggle against usurpation, and not a resistance against law. You may make it binding as a law, but you cannot make it obligatory on conscience. It will be obeyed as long as England is strong, but resistance to it will be in the abstract a duty, and the exhibition of that resistance will be a mere question of prudence.”

The combined exertions of almost all the men of talent, and of almost all the men of pure patriotism in the Parliament were this year successful. The Government Bill was defeated by 109 to 104, and the illumination of Dublin attested the feeling of the people. The Liberals did all that was in their power to secure their triumph, for they foresaw clearly that the struggle would be renewed. Ponsonby brought forward a resolution, pledging the House to resist every future measure involving the principle it had condemned, but he was compelled eventually to withdraw it. Mr. Dobbs, a lawyer of some talents and the purest patriotism, but whose influence was impaired by an extraordinary monomania on the subject of prophecy,* brought forward a series of measures

* He believed that Armagh is Armageddon. The Irish, it appears, of Armagh is Armaceaddon; *c* and *g* are interchangeable letters, and thus, by contraction, we should have Armageddon. Armaceaddon means the hill of the prophet; and some "eminent Hebrew scholar" considered that Armageddon meant much the same. Had he been a prophet of the present day, he would have doubtless added that Armagh seems specially adapted for a theological battle—two hills frowning upon each other, the one surmounted by a Protestant and the other by a Roman Catholic cathedral. Mr. Dobbs also considered that the "white linen" in Revelations alluded to the linen trade in Ireland, the sea of glass to its insular position, and the harps borne by the angels to its national arms. He was further of opinion that the Giant's Causeway bore a strong resemblance to the Stone of Daniel. He wrote two books—"A Short View of Prophecy," and "A

for the purpose of tranquillising the country, comprising Reform, Catholic Emancipation, and the payment of the priests; but the Government was again successful, and the shadow of the coming year fell darkly on every patriotic mind.

These gloomy forebodings were soon verified. After corruption so vast, so flagrant, and so shameless, that it has no parallel in the history of representative institutions, the measure was again introduced, and this time with success. Grattan was suffering from a severe illness. His strength was completely prostrated, and he was not in a fit condition for the most moderate exertion, far less for a great political contest. In his country's extremity, however, it was not fitting that he should be absent from her councils, and he accordingly procured his election for Wicklow, and entered the House during the debate. He wore the uniform of the Volunteers. He was so feeble that he could only walk with the assistance of two friends, and his head hung drooping upon his chest, but the fire of genius still sparkled in his eye, and the flush of deep emotion mantled his cheek. There was a moment's pause, an electric thrill passed through the House, and then a long wild cheer

Universal History, both in letters to his son. Unlike most persons who indulge in these eccentric opinions, he was as liberal as he was patriotic, and was selected by Grattan to carry the resolutions in favour of the revocation of the penal laws to the Volunteers at Dungannon.

burst from the galleries. Shortly afterwards he rose to speak, but his strength failed him, and he obtained leave to address the House sitting. Then was witnessed that spectacle, among the grandest in the whole range of mental phenomena, of mind asserting its supremacy over matter—of the power of enthusiasm and the power of genius nerving a feeble and an emaciated frame. As the fire of oratory kindled—as the angel of enthusiasm touched those pallid lips with the living coal—as the old scenes crowded on the speaker's mind, and the old plaudits broke upon his ear, it seemed as though the force of disease was neutralised, and the buoyancy of youth restored ; his voice gained a deeper power, his action a more commanding energy, his eloquence an ever-increasing brilliancy. For more than two hours he poured forth a stream of epigram, of argument, and of appeal. He traversed almost the whole of that complex question—he grappled with the various arguments of expediency the Ministers had urged, but he placed the issue on the highest of grounds. “The thing he proposes to buy is what cannot be sold—liberty.” When he at last concluded, it must have been felt by all his friends, that if the Irish Parliament could have been saved by eloquence, it would have been saved by him. He had been for some time vehemently denounced in Parliament, and Corry now attempted to crush him by a violent attack. Grattan however treated his ad-

versary with contemptuous silence till the assault had been three times repeated, when he terminated the contest by a very brief but most crushing invective, and a duel, in which Corry was wounded, was the result.

It was soon evident, however, that no eloquence and no arguments could save the constitution of Ireland. In division after division Grattan was defeated, and he saw with an ineffable anguish the edifice which he had done so much to construct sinking into inevitable dissolution. Night after night the contest was vainly prolonged with a feverish and impassioned earnestness. Yet, even at that period, hope was not quite extinguished in the patriotic party. They saw that a union was inevitable, but some, at least, looked beyond it. "I know," said Goold, "that the Ministers must succeed, yet I will not go away with an aching heart, because I know that the liberties of the people must ultimately triumph. The people must at present submit, because they cannot resist 120,000 armed men; but the period will occur when, as in 1782, England may be weak, and Ireland sufficiently strong to recover her lost liberties." Nor were the last words of Grattan devoid of hope: "The constitution," he exclaimed, "may for a time be lost, but the character of the people cannot be lost. The Ministers of the Crown may perhaps at length find out that it is not so easy to put down for ever an ancient and

respectable nation by abilities however great, or by corruption however irresistible. Liberty may repair her golden beams, and with redoubled heat animate the country. The cry of loyalty will not long continue against the principles of liberty. Loyalty is a noble, a judicious, and a capacious principle, but in these countries loyalty distinct from liberty is corruption, not loyalty. The cry of the connection will not in the end avail against the principles of liberty. Connection is a wise and a profound policy, but connection without an Irish Parliament is connection without its own principle, without analogy of condition, without the pride of honour that should attend it; is innovation, is peril, is subjugation—not connection. . . . Identification is a solid and imperial maxim, necessary for the preservation of freedom, necessary for that of empire; but without union of hearts, with a separate Government and without a separate Parliament, identification is extinction, is dishonour, is conquest—not identification. Yet I do not give up my country. I see her in a swoon, but she is not dead. Though in her tomb she lies helpless and motionless, still there is on her lips a spirit of life, and on her cheek a glow of beauty:—

‘Thou art not conquer’d: beauty’s ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death’s pale flag is not advanced there.’

While a plank of the vessel stands together, I will not leave her. Let the courtier present his flimsy sail, and carry the light bark of his faith with every new breath of wind; I will remain anchored here with fidelity to the fortunes of my country, faithful to her freedom, faithful to her fall." These were the last words of Grattan in the Irish Parliament.

In England, Sheridan resisted the measure at every step of its progress with the most intense and persevering earnestness. He moved that its consideration should be delayed till the sentiments of the people of Ireland had been ascertained, but his motion was defeated by 30 to 206. "I would have fought for that Irish Parliament," he afterwards exclaimed to Grattan—"aye, up to the knees in blood!" Among the speakers on the measure in the House of Lords was Lord Byron, who described it as the "union of the shark with its prey." All opposition, however, was fruitless, and the Bill received the Royal Assent on the 1st of August.

The Irish Parliament was constitutionally incompetent to pass the Union. It was the trustee, not the possessor, of the legislative power. It was appointed to legislate, not to transfer legislation—to serve the people for eight years, not to hand over the people to another legislature. The Act was in principle the same as if the Sovereign of England were to transfer her authority to the

Sovereign of France. Such a procedure was constitutionally a nullity and a political suicide.

In the words of Locke "The legislature neither must nor can transfer the power of making laws to anybody else or place it anywhere but where the people have."

If we pass over this objection, it is sufficiently plain that the Parliament could not, in accordance with any constitutional principle, destroy its existence as a permanent institution without the consent of its constituents. No important alteration should ever be made in the representation of a free nation without a direct appeal to the people. And yet the Union, which destroyed a Parliament that had existed in Ireland for centuries, and had been emancipated by the enthusiasm of the entire nation, was passed without a dissolution.

A million and a-half sterling was expended as a compensation for the destruction of the boroughs. This measure had a direct and overwhelming influence upon both Houses, for a very large proportion of the members of the House of Commons were returned by Peers. It would be a waste of time to enter into a proof that such an expenditure was diametrically opposed to the fundamental principles of free and constitutional government. At the time of the English Reform Bill it was suggested that the Irish precedent should be adopted, but the notion was at once

cried down. Such things were only to be done in Ireland.

Innumerable bribes were offered to the members; peers were created in such numbers and in such a manner that the dignity of the Irish Peerage was permanently lowered. The character of the Bench for many years was seriously impaired by the ignorant and incapable lawyers who were made judges on account of their vote. Vast sums of money, numerous places, and lavish promises were distributed among the supporters of the Government. One member is said to have actually spoken against the measure, and then, in consideration of a higher offer, to have voted for it! Grattan said that only seven unbribed men voted for the Union, and the extent of the corruption is admitted even by its warmest supporters.

Several English and Scotch men were elected to turn the balance.

Hopes were held out to the Roman Catholics that the Union would be followed by their emancipation. On this ground, Archbishop Troy and some other ecclesiastics supported it, though without the concurrence of the laity. Pitt resigned in 1801, ostensibly because the King refused to consent to emancipation, but he resumed office soon afterwards without making any stipulation on the subject. At that time his position was such that the government of the country

could not have been carried on without him, and the King would therefore have been obliged to yield. In other words, what little support the Roman Catholics gave the Union was given from a hope which was never realised, and it was in the power of Pitt to have realised it.

Not only was the will of the people not consulted by a dissolution, but its expression in other ways was obstructed. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended ; military law reigned over the country ; Insurrection Acts were passed, even during the discussion. It was clearly understood that the Government regarded those who opposed the Union as sympathisers with rebellion. Soldiers were sometimes sent to watch their proceedings, and, as they might at any moment be arrested, they lived in constant insecurity. On the other hand, to petition in favour of the Union was to establish a kind of claim upon the Government.

Yet, in spite of all this, twenty-eight counties, of which twenty were unanimous, petitioned against the Union, besides many large towns and corporations. The petitions against the Union bore more than 700,000 signatures, the petitions in favour of it only 7000.* Nothing seems clearer than that almost all the unbribed members of the Parliament and the vast majority of the people were opposed to it.

Such were the circumstances under which the

* See Grattan's Life, by his Son.

Union was passed, and if the principles of Grattan be true, the joy-bells of St. Patrick that announced the consummation of the crime rang out the liberties of Ireland.

Irishmen are frequently asked how they can maintain that the Union was an infringement upon their liberties, when it left every avenue of public life unobstructed, and their freedom of action and of speech is in every respect intact. The answer is very simple. When we speak of a free nation, two distinct ideas are included in the term: that each individual in that nation can say and do what he pleases as long as he does not injure his neighbour, and that the government of that nation is in accordance with the wishes of the governed. That Ireland possesses the former description of liberty, and that the British constitution is admirably adapted to perpetuate it, is fully admitted. The men who led the opposition to the Union were the warmest admirers of that constitution, and the warmest supporters of the connection. The old dream of a republic has long since passed away. It is felt that such a Government, however beautiful in theory, proves above all others fragile in practice; that it is in continual danger of sinking under a despot or a mob, and that it was not without wisdom that Liberty was represented by the ancients with a sceptre in her hand. But, upon the other hand, no country can be said, in the full sense of the word, to be

free, in which there exists a form of government that was imposed without its consent, and is retained without its acquiescence. That the Union was imposed on Ireland without the real consent and contrary to the wish of the nation, no rational man can deny. Whether it is even now the expression of the nation's will is a matter of controversy. The passages we have cited from the speeches of the opponents of the measure were therefore no mere rhetorical embellishment, but a simple, unexaggerated statement of a plain fact. The Union was an encroachment on the liberty of the Irish people, and, being such, no argument of expediency could justify it.

We have already considered at length the alleged effect of the Union in promoting Catholic Emancipation, which was one of the principal arguments of expediency urged by its supporters. Another, which had great weight, was the corruption of the Irish Parliament. It must be admitted that this was a strange argument to advance. It was tantamount to calling upon the members to declare that they were so unprincipled that the government of the country could not be safely entrusted to their hands. It was strange, too, because English Sovereigns had created the small boroughs, and the English Government had resisted every effort to destroy them, and English gold was ceaselessly employed in aggravating the evil. Passing, however, over

these considerations, we answer that the Reform of Parliament should be the result of the development of public opinion within the nation, not of the interposition of an external power. The expansion of the national mind, the progress of the press, and the increase of education, are sufficient to effect the reform of any constitution, however corrupt, as long as they are given free scope for action. The whole political system in a free nation will sooner or later be governed by public opinion, and will vibrate with its every breath. The Irish Parliament, though very corrupt when compared with the British Parliament of the present day, was not very corrupt when compared with that of a somewhat earlier period. The charges against it simply amount to this: that it was habitually guided by sordid motives, though it must be admitted that it, on several occasions, rose above them. This description is undoubtedly a melancholy one, but it is precisely applicable to the English Parliament during much the greater part of the last century. No one has stigmatised the Irish Parliament in harsher language than Lord Macaulay, but it was hardly possible for him to apply to it stronger terms of condemnation than he has applied to the English Parliament in the days of Walpole, who "governed by corruption, because in his time it was impossible to govern otherwise." "A large proportion of the members," we are told, "had absolutely no motive

to support any Administration, except their own interest in the lowest sense of the word. Under these circumstances the country could be governed only by corruption. The fault was in the constitution of the Legislature, and to blame those Ministers who managed the Legislature in the only way in which it could be managed is grossly unjust. We might as well accuse the poor Lowland farmers who paid black-mail to Rob Roy of corrupting the virtue of the Highlanders, as accuse Sir R. Walpole of corrupting the virtue of Parliament." *

But in truth it is not for an English pen to write the epitaph of that Parliament which English gold destroyed. The time may come when the historians of other nations may review its history, and we doubt not that, while they will find much to blame, they will find far more to admire. Seldom has even the Imperial Parliament exhibited a constellation of genius so brilliant, so varied, and so pure as that which is suggested by the names of Grattan and Flood, of Curran, Plunket, and Burrowes. That a Legislature so defective in its constitution should have continued to exist is indeed wonderful, but it is far more wonderful that it should have achieved what it did—that it should have asserted its own independence—that it should have riven the chains that fettered its trade—that it should have re-

* *Essay on Walpole's Letters.*

moved the most serious disabilities under which the mass of the people laboured—that it should have voluntarily given up the monopoly of power which it possessed, as representing the Protestants alone.

These were no light services, no trivial claims to our gratitude, and they render the language we often hear on the subject unjust, even to absurdity. In estimating the character of a legislature we should consider the period of its existence, the difficulties with which it had to contend, and the temptations to which it was exposed; and, if these things be taken into account, the Irish Parliament need not shrink from the trial. The clouds of obloquy with which party spirit has obscured it must, sooner or later, be dispelled, and the enthusiasm and the national feeling of Ireland will long revert to the period of its independence, as forming the one bright parenthesis in a history which is covered, like the prophet's roll, with lamentation, and weeping, and mourning.

“I argue not,” said Grattan, “like the minister, from the misconduct of one Parliament against the being of Parliament itself. I value that parliamentary constitution by the average of its benefits, and I affirm that the blessings procured by the Irish Parliament in the last twenty years are greater than the blessings afforded by British Parliaments to Ireland for the last century; greater

even than the mischiefs inflicted on Ireland by British Parliaments, greater than all the blessings procured by those Parliaments for their own country within that period. Within that time the Legislature of England lost an empire, and the Legislature of Ireland recovered a constitution."

Another argument for the Union was that a separate Parliament endangered the existence of the connection. Two illustrations of this danger have been given—the Rebellion of '98, and the dissension between England and Ireland on the Regency question. The former may be very rapidly disposed of; for to identify it in any degree with the independence of Parliament, is to manifest a complete ignorance of the facts of the case. The Rebellion of '98 was produced by exceptional causes; by the excitement consequent upon the French Revolution, acting upon the excitement consequent on the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. It was not represented by any party in Parliament. Grattan, who was the leader of the Liberals, was so bitterly opposed to everything French, that he completely separated himself on French questions from Fox, with whom he generally acted, and who looked with favour on the Revolution. He once even went so far as to speak of "eternal friendship with France" as one of the "curses" to which Ireland would be doomed if Emancipation was withheld. On the other hand, perhaps, no one ever denounced the Parliament more

vehemently than Wolfe Tone, the leader of the insurgents. The people rebelled not because there was an organ of public opinion in the land, but because that organ, while unreformed, did not sufficiently represent the national feeling. It was the energetic exertion of the Parliament that repressed the Rebellion before the arrival of the English troops; and, had it not been for its prompt and decisive action, it is difficult to say how far the movement might have spread.

The second illustration to which we have referred suggests a far graver and more weighty argument. It is perfectly true that if the Parliament of Ireland (or of Canada) dissented on some important question from that of England, and if neither side would concede anything, serious difficulties would arise, and the existence of the connection would be endangered. No one, however, except an extreme democrat, should consider this argument alone as decisive, for a very similar danger exists in the British constitution itself. A difference arising among the three elements that compose that constitution, in which each obstinately refused to yield, might bring the Government to a dead lock, or even create a revolution or war of classes. The complexity of the constitution is retained, not because such a catastrophe is wholly impossible, but because it is believed that the advantages preponderate over the disadvantages: because, although

under certain circumstances that complexity might create discord and revolution, it is, on the whole, admirably calculated to prevent or to allay them. If a legislative union could have been effected between England and Ireland, with the full consent of the Irish people, and without destroying their national life: in other words, if the two nations could have coalesced under such a system, if there could have been a fusion of character, an identification of hopes, of interests, and of desires, a lively and habitual feeling of sympathy between them,—there can be no doubt that such a union would have consolidated the empire, and strengthened the connection. The measure of 1800, however, effected an identification of government, without an identification of sentiments. It centralized, but it could not unite. It imposed on the people a form of government, which, whatever its intrinsic merits may be, was obnoxious to them because it was imposed contrary to their wish. It produced that permanent, sullen discontent, that unsympathizing and alienated tone, which is the natural concomitant of humiliation. Before the Union there was every prospect of the two nations approximating. Every year the memory of their past differences would have become fainter, every reform would have removed a cause of complaint, every act of co-operation would have strengthened their sympathy. An energetic national life permeated and animated

the country ; a spirit of pride, of honour, and of emulation stimulated and inspired its policy. But by the Union pride was exchanged for humiliation, sympathy for hatred, political for sectarian feeling. After an unsuccessful struggle to regain their constitution, the people seem to have lost all interest in politics, as such, and to have devoted their entire energies to sectarian controversy. The extent and nature of this evil we shall hereafter have to consider, but the fact is sufficiently patent to be assumed. It is scarcely possible to examine the sentiments of the Roman Catholics at least, as represented by their press, by their Members of Parliament, and by their clergy, without perceiving that they are, as a body, alienated from the policy of the empire, that their guiding spirit is sectarianism, not patriotism, and that their instinctive sympathies are directly opposed to those of the English people. And on all this there is stamped a character of *permanence*. The chasm between the two religions seems to widen instead of lessen, the preponderance of clerical influence seems to increase instead of diminish, the repugnance between the nations becomes continually more manifest. For forty-seven years after the Union the people of Ireland were surging in one great agitation ; but men said that it was the work of a single man, and that time would quell all angry feeling. At length that man died, and suffering, the great pacifier of nations,

came with fearful power upon the land. Horrors that it would need the pen of a Manzoni to describe, were everywhere witnessed. The population of entire districts was nearly annihilated by absolute starvation. Cholera followed on the steps of famine, and emigration began its ceaseless drain. In whatever direction he turned, roofless cottages and desolated villages met the traveller's eye, and in a few years the population was diminished by a million and a half. Suffering is well known to have the same effect as time on nations as on individuals, and the work of a century was compressed into a year. The national character seemed radically altered. The buoyancy, the vivacity, the cheerfulness, that once characterized it had disappeared. The almost superstitious affection for "home" was exchanged for a reckless desire for emigration. The attachment to the soil having passed away, it was believed that the national feeling had vanished too; and the leading journal congratulated England* on the dispersion of an intractable nation. But time rolled on, and, with returning prosperity, the old feeling re-appeared, no less extensive and more inveterate than before. The old language was heard again;

* "They are gone ! gone with a vengeance!" It was remarked that this saying had more truth than the writer intended. The avenging spirit that accompanies the Irish emigrant shows itself very plainly in the councils of America and of Australia.

the old virulence was again displayed : and it was admitted that the power of the priests had never been more absolute, and the repugnance of the people to English politics never more intense, and the spirit of sectarianism never more absorbing. This is the broad fact which forms the great difficulty of the statesman in dealing with Ireland, and the great danger of the connection. As Grattan once said, "the best husbandry is the husbandry of the human creature;" and if the connection is not to depend upon force, it must depend upon the cultivation of the sympathies of the people. Legislative alterations are comparatively worthless, except as far as they conduce to the promotion of that sympathy. It is the true cement of nations, it is the essence and the condition of their prosperity. If this be the case there can be little doubt that the Union was inimical to a friendly connection, for there can be little doubt that it exercised a pernicious influence upon the national character. In such a question authority may have considerable weight. Ireland never possessed so many great politicians as at the time of the Union. They were all of them favourable to the connection, and they were all of them hostile to the Union. Grattan especially repeatedly predicted that it would eventually prove the greatest danger to the connection.

The Union was a measure which reflected very accurately the character of its framer. We be-

lieve that the whole tendency of late years has been to show that, while William Pitt was undoubtedly a very great man, he was not a great statesman. A rhetorician of the very highest order, a Member of Parliament of consummate tact, a leader wonderfully gifted with those talents that command the admiration, and enthrall the judgment of a people, there was yet one fatal defect in his constitution—he was unable to appreciate the value of national enthusiasm. His cold and unsympathising nature was written on every feature of his countenance, it was betrayed in his every feature, and mingled with and impaired his every talent. The scrupulous integrity and unflinching courage he displayed, and the grandeur of the position he occupied, captivated all who contemplated him from a distance, but his manner chilled and offended all with whom he came in contact. As an orator, though unrivalled in modern times in sustained purity and dignity of language, and in perfection of elocution; and though his powers of reasoning and of sarcasm have seldom been excelled, yet he scarcely stands in the foremost rank. His speeches wanted the true Promethean fire, the glow of feeling, the living spirit of genius. Their inspiration was not of passion, but of pride. The same defect appears in his statesmanship. His utter inability to appreciate the intense character of the French Revolution plunged England into a disastrous and

humiliating war. His indifference to, or ignorance of, the feelings of the Irish people perpetuated discontent and agitation in Ireland. He was, perhaps, the greatest of those chess-board politicians who omit but one element from their calculations—the passions of humanity.

When the Union was passed, Grattan for a time retired from politics. His health had been for some time unsatisfactory, and his spirits were greatly depressed by a defeat which he regarded as the destruction of the liberties of his country. He saw in it the overthrow of the entire labour of his life, and it unfolded to his piercing eye a long vista of agitation, of disloyalty, and disaster. For some time he could not bear to hear it discussed in conversation, his eyes often filled with tears when speaking of it, and he occasionally broke into paroxysms of indignation on the subject, that contrasted strangely with his usual gentleness. The people, who had been paralysed by the late Rebellion, remained in a state of stupefied and sullen quiescence. Emmett's rebellion, which took place in 1803, cannot be regarded as in any degree the consequence of the Union. It was but the last wave of the Rebellion of 1798, and originated in the over-heated brain of an amiable and gifted, but most unpractical enthusiast. One great cause, however, still remained, and to the service of Catholics Grattan resolved to devote his remaining years. He entered the British Par-

liament in 1805, and took his seat modestly on one of the back benches; but Fox exclaiming "This is no place for the Irish Demosthenes!" drew him forward, and placed him near himself. Great doubts were felt about his success. The difference of tone and habits of the two parliaments, the advanced age of Grattan, the recent failure of Flood, and the cause Grattan had assigned for that failure,* suggested weighty reason for fear. Much anxiety, therefore, and much curiosity, were felt when he rose to speak on the Catholic question. For a moment, it is said, that the strangeness of his gestures, and the apparent difficulty of his enunciation, served to confirm those fears; but it was but for a moment. After almost the first passage he was listened to with an intense and ever-increasing admiration, and when he sat down it was felt that he had more than justified his reputation. It was, indeed, one of the very greatest speeches he ever delivered. It would be difficult to point out any other that displayed a more wonderful combination of powerful reasoning, epigram, imagination, and declamation, chastened by the purest taste, and adapted to the audience with the most consummate tact. Pitt, who made the first motion of applause, exclaimed, "Burke told me that Grattan

* "He was an oak of the forest too old and too great to be transplanted at fifty."

was a wonderful man for a popular audience, and I see that he was right." The 'Annual Register' called the speech "one of the most brilliant and eloquent ever pronounced within the walls of parliament." It was in the course of this speech that, in adverting to the first Catholic Relief Bill, he digressed into an eulogium of the Irish Parliament; and, speaking of the services he had rendered to its freedom, uttered that sentence so famous for its touching and concentrated beauty—"I watched by its cradle; I followed its hearse."

The Union, by making the public opinion of England the arbiter of the Catholic question, had entirely altered its conditions, and, as we have already endeavoured to show, had considerably increased its difficulties. Public opinion had also about this period taken a direction strongly adverse to emancipation. A movement had been for some time fermenting in England which had in a great measure dispelled the indifference on doctrinal questions that had long been prevalent, and had created a strong Protestant feeling among the people.

It will be sufficiently evident to any one who follows the history of the two Churches that their separation had reached its extreme limit when the Puritans were dominant in England and Bossuet was ruling public opinion in France. The Puritans represented Protestantism in its most exaggerated

and undiluted form, while Bossuet, who exercised a greater influence over the lay mind than perhaps any theologian since Calvin, was maintaining the tenets of his Church with the most unflagging zeal. He was indeed so far from adopting any extreme or ultramontane opinions that he even entered into a correspondence with Liebnitz on the possibility of a compromise; but he asserted most emphatically the great distinctive principle of authority. He defined the points of difference with such a rigid accuracy that no evasion was possible; and he laid a greater stress upon dogmas as distinguished from morals than perhaps any other popular writer of his Church. After this period, for about a century, the two systems seemed rapidly approximating. If we compare the sermons of Massillon with those of Bossuet we see the change in its commencement; if we compare the sermons of Blair or of Kirwan with those of the early Anglican divines, we see it in its completion. Dogma had formerly almost superseded practical teaching, but it now in its turn gave way. The Christian preacher became at last simply an expounder of morals. A well-regulated disposition, a virtuous life, and an active benevolence, were represented as almost a summary of Christianity. The Bible was regarded as a repository of noble maxims and of instructive examples. The triumph of religion would be merely the per-

fection of order, the apotheosis, and the completion of government. This tendency may be in part ascribed to the natural reaction and fatigue that followed the fierce controversies of the preceding century; and it was also in a great measure due to the prevalence of scepticism in both Churches. In England sceptical opinions had been maintained openly by Bolingbroke, and Gibbon, and Hume; and if the whole light literature at the close of the last century was not Voltairian in its spirit, it was probably owing in a great measure to the extraordinary influence of Dr. Johnson. In France no such restraint existed. Voltaire and Rousseau towered far above their contemporaries, and never disguised their sentiments. The sarcasms of Voltaire turned the whole stream of ridicule and wit against the Church; while the burning eloquence, the impassioned earnestness, and the intense realizing powers of Rousseau, fell with terrific effect on its tottering system. The University of Paris issued an answer to the 'Vicar of Savoy,' but it is now almost forgotten. All the real talent of the country seemed ranged against the established faith, and its defenders were compelled to adopt an apologetical and an evasive tone. It was quite true that all infants who died unbaptized were doomed to perdition, but then hell was an indefinite expression, and comprised a variety of conditions, and St. Augus-

tine was not prepared to say that it would be better for those children had they never been born. Purgatory was undoubtedly a Catholic doctrine, but it was not necessarily the place of torment by fire which was portrayed in the pictures in every church. Though the priests had at one time celebrated almost every royal marriage in Spain by an auto-da-fé, and though a Pope had struck medals in commemoration of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, yet the spirit of Torquemada and of Catherine de Medicis might be safely reprehended by the orthodox. The doctrine of invincible ignorance which had before been thrown into the background was brought forward and paraded. The doctrine of infallibility was interpreted in its broadest sense, and the attribute was applied not to an individual but to the whole Church. Above all, the purity of the moral teaching of Christianity was asserted and displayed. In this manner the two religions began rapidly to assimilate, when the tide again turned, and a violent revulsion set in. In Roman Catholic countries Ultramontanism once more became dominant after the Revolution, but it purchased its triumph dearly. The priests taught the most extreme Roman Catholic doctrines, while the educated laity remained disciples of Montaigne, if not of Voltaire. In England the Methodists had begun their noble labours; and, after many years

of comparatively unnoticed preaching among the poor, their principles began to leaven the higher ranks, and to embody themselves in the great Evangelical party. The members of this party were admirably fitted, both by their failings and by their virtues, to exercise a great influence upon the people. Among the former may be reckoned a bigotry intense even to absurdity, an utter inability to appreciate any good thing outside their own body, and a gloominess of temperament that not unfrequently drove them from all external influences and secular amusements, and induced them, like the demoniac in Scripture, to dwell "continually among the tombs." Among the latter was a zeal in converting the heathen and educating the poor, and searching out and relieving every species of suffering that has scarcely ever been excelled in the Church. No religious party is more distinguished for the practice of good works, and no religious party values them less. The Evangelicals had also the immense advantage of resting on one broad, definite, and intelligible principle—the doctrine of justification by faith taken in its strictest sense.

The Ultramontane and the Evangelical movements completely altered the attitude of the two religions both towards scepticism and towards each other. Voltaire had maintained in France that the doctrines of the Church were contrary to

reason and to the moral sense; and Ultramontanism answered that these were absolutely incompetent to judge them. Bolingbroke had argued in England that the moral teaching of Christianity existed in the works of the pagan philosophers; and the Evangelical replied that a moral system had no efficacy as a means of salvation, and was only enforced in the New Testament as a secondary and subordinate object. The two sections of Christianity had been approximating, on the ground of common duties; and the Evangelical taught that man could not perform duties acceptably, and that the whole scope and purport of Christianity was to teach a doctrine which the Church of Rome refused to admit. Against this Church, then, as the most powerful, the most subtle, and the most specious opponent of truth, all the energies of the Evangelicals were directed. They traced its lineaments in every intimation of coming apostacy contained in the prophetic writings. They recognised it as the horn of Daniel “speaking proud things”—as the mystic Babylon, red with the blood of the saints—as the Man of Sin, who was to be revealed when the Roman empire was removed—as the spirit of Antichrist, that was to seduce and to triumph in the latter days. They revived the tragic histories of byegone persecutions that transcended the worst efforts of paganism; they laboured with the same untiring assiduity in the pulpit and on the

hustings,* in the religious tale and the newspaper article, to repress and to crush the Church they feared. The grotesque exaggerations of the ignorant, and the interests and the passions of the vicious, blended with the religious movement, and intensified the religious intolerance that began everywhere to manifest itself. Of all the evils that have ever cursed humanity, it may well be doubted whether there is any so inveterate, so unmitigated, and so revolting, as this intolerance; for, as Grattan admirably observed, “conscience, which restrains every other vice, becomes the prompter here.” There is no atrocity that it will not perpetrate; there is no absurdity that it will not endorse; there is no contradiction that it will not applaud. The annals of human crime contain no blacker page than the history of the Inquisition in Spain or the triumph of Catholicism in France. The records of human folly contain no more glaring inconsistencies than the riots, and the invectives, and the animosity that have followed in England and Ireland a religion of peace, of order, and of love.

In 1795 the Orange Society had started into existence, and signalled its commencement by

* One brilliant exception to this general truth was furnished by the life of Wilberforce. That great man exhibits one of the few examples history records of the combination of the most intense zeal with the widest liberality. Among other services to the Roman Catholics, he obtained the vote of Mr. Richard Spooner for Emancipation.

spreading riots over a great part of the north of Ireland. Wesley had turned aside from his religious labours to write against the removal of the penal laws, but the great embodiment of the spirit of intolerance was the notorious Dr. Duigenan.

This very singular personage had been himself originally a Roman Catholic. He was a man of low extraction, but of some talents, and had been a Fellow of Trinity College, where he wrote a book against the provost, Hely Hutchinson. He obtained a seat in the Irish House of Commons, and laboured without success to procure the cessation of the Maynooth grant which had been made during the administration of Lord Fitzwilliam. He was one of the warmest supporters of the Union, and in the English parliament the most vituperative and indefatigable opponent of the Catholic claims. He adopted that method which is still employed by some politicians, of exhuming all the immoral sentiments of the schoolmen, the Jesuit casuists, and the mediæval councils, and parading them continually before the parliament and before the country.* Against this system Grattan energetically pro-

* It is curious that he was married to a Roman Catholic; he proposed to her and was refused when young, but was accepted many years after when she was a widow. In spite, however, or perhaps, in consequence of matrimony, his antipathy to the Church of Rome continued unabated to the end.

tested. "No religion," he said, in one of his speeches, "can stand if men, without regard to their God, and with regard only to controversy, shall rake out of the rubbish of antiquity the obsolete and quaint follies of the sectarians, and affront the majesty of the Almighty with the impudent catalogue of their devices; and it is a strong argument against the prescriptive system that it helps to continue this shocking contest: theologian against theologian, polemic against polemic, until the two madmen defame their common parent, and expose their common religion."

Every year the state of feeling in Ireland became worse. As is always the case, the destruction of national feeling gave an increased bitterness to sectarian controversy, and turned almost all the energies of the country into that channel. The Roman Catholics, who had formerly been almost passive, began to agitate vehemently, and to complain bitterly that Pitt opposed their emancipation, though he had formerly professed himself favourable to it. The Evangelical movement in Ireland had chiefly assumed an aggressive character, and the effects of the Rebellion of '98 had not yet subsided. A few years after the Union there were no less than five distinct parties agitating actively;—the French party, who cherished the traditions of '98; the armed Orangemen, who were pillaging the county Armagh, and whom

Grattan perhaps rather too severely described * as “a banditti of marauders committing massacres in the name of God, and exercising despotic power in the name of liberty;” the more pacific Tories, who were arguing against emancipation; the moderate Liberals, who followed Grattan, and comprised a large section of the Protestants, and almost all the higher orders of Roman Catholics; and the extreme Liberals, who were beginning to rise under the inspiration of O’Connell, and who included the Roman Catholic clergy and the lower orders. When we add to this that the English public was becoming thoroughly permeated by the Evangelical movement, the difficulty of Grattan’s position becomes very apparent.

He determined to keep himself entirely independent. He refused office in Fox’s Ministry, which came in in 1806, and he refused to accept 4000*l.*, which the Roman Catholics subscribed in the same year, to defray the expenses of his election for Dublin. He kept up a correspondence with every section of the Constitutional Liberals, but he would not place himself in the hands of any. In 1807 he offended some of his friends, by supporting the Government Coercion Bill, for he believed that the French party were still very

* The modern Orangemen would be better described by the lines of Hood:—

“Those who would rush on a benighted man,
And give him two black eyes for being blind.”

powerful in Ireland. In 1808, he entered into the Veto question. This proposition, which at one time created so much agitation, was an attempt to produce a compromise; the English Parliament consenting to emancipate the Catholics, on the condition that a power of veto was reserved to the English Sovereign in the election of Catholic bishops. The proposal was then much discussed and warmly accepted by the whole body of Roman Catholics of England, by the upper order of those of Ireland, and by Grattan himself. The conduct of the bishops is very obscure, and seems to have been very vacillating. At first they appear to have been inclined to accept the compromise, and Grattan understood from Bishop Milner that he might make this proposal on their behalf; but they afterwards, at the instigation of O'Connell, vehemently opposed it. This produced a complete schism between the gentry and the clergy, and undoubtedly retarded the triumph of the cause. In 1813 a bill, accompanied by the veto and some minor securities, actually passed a second reading, and was finally rejected by a majority of only four, but the bishops afterwards denounced it. In the following year the Catholic Board, at the suggestion of O'Connell, called upon Grattan to place himself under their direction; and, upon his refusal, took their petition out of his hands, and entrusted it to Sir Henry Parnell.

It was touching to see the old statesman thus

superseded in the cause he had served so long, yet rising without one word of complaint, of recrimination, or of bitterness, to support his younger colleague. The more moderate party still made him their representative, and nothing in his whole career is more admirable than the good taste and the self-abnegation which he manifested throughout. He made it a rule, as he said, "Never to defend himself at the expense of his country," and he displayed the same zeal and the same eloquence as when his popularity was greatest. The ill-feeling was at one time so strong that, after his election for Dublin, in 1818, he was assaulted by a mob in the streets. All parties were heartily ashamed of the act, and the Roman Catholics and the Orangemen reciprocally charged each other with the guilt. Notwithstanding this ebullition, there can be little doubt that he rose higher and higher in the estimation of the educated of all parties, and that the moderation and the exquisite tact he manifested exercised a most powerful influence upon Parliament. O'Connell adopted an entirely different course; but, as we shall see, O'Connell's object was, in all probability, a different one; and, even when opposing Grattan, he extolled his patriotism in the highest terms.

To the Catholic question, Grattan devoted the entire energies of his latter years. With the exception of one very brilliant and very successful speech in favour of immediate war with France, in

1815, he never spoke at length on any other subject. In 1819, he was defeated by a smaller majority than on any former year; and in 1820 he went over to London, to bring the subject forward again, when the illness under which he had for some time been labouring assumed a more violent and deadly character. He lingered for a few days, retaining to the last his full consciousness and interest in public affairs. Those who gathered around his death-bed, observed with emotion how fondly and how constantly his mind reverted to that legislature which he had served so faithfully, and had loved so well. It seemed as though the forms of its guiding spirits rose more vividly on his mind as the hour approached when he was to join them in another world; and, among the last words he is recorded to have uttered, we find a warm and touching eulogium of his great rival, Flood, and many glowing recollections of his fellow-labourers in Ireland. He passed away tranquilly and happily on the 6th of June, 1820. He died, as a patriot might wish to die, crowned with honours and with years, with the love of friends and the admiration of opponents, leaving a nation to deplore his loss, and not an enemy to obscure his fame.

It is at the tombs of great men that succeeding generations kindle the lamp of patriotism, and it might have been supposed that he whose life was fraught with so many weighty lessons, and whose

memory possesses so deep a charm, would have rested at last in his own land and among his own people. Another, and, as it would seem to some, a nobler lot, was reserved for Grattan. A request was made to his friends that his remains might rest in Westminster Abbey, and that request was complied with. He lies near the tombs of Pitt and Fox. The place is an honourable one, but it was the only honour that was bestowed on him. Not a bust, not an epitaph marks the spot where the greatest of Irish orators sleeps; but one stately form seems to bend over that unnoticed grave. It is the statue of Castlereagh, "the statesman of the legislative union."

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

WHILE the Union was under discussion in the Irish Parliament, no class of persons exerted themselves more energetically in opposing it than the Dublin lawyers. Among the many meetings they held for this purpose there was one which assumed a peculiar significance from its being composed entirely of Roman Catholics. They assembled to protest against the assertion that the Roman Catholics, as a body, were favourable to the measure ; to express their opinion that it would exercise an injurious influence upon the struggle for emancipation ; to declare that were it otherwise they did not desire to purchase that boon at the expense of the independence of the nation. Military law was then reigning, and a body of troops, under Major Sirr, were present at the Exchange to watch the proceedings. It was under these rather trying circumstances that a young lawyer, "trembling," as he afterwards said, "at the sound of his own voice," rose to make his maiden speech. He delivered a short address against the Union, which, if it contained no very original or striking views,

had at least the merit of exhibiting the common arguments in the clearest and most convincing light; and he shortly after hurried to a newspaper office to deposit a copy for publication. This young lawyer was Daniel O'Connell, the great Irish agitator. We confess that it is not without hesitation that we approach this part of our subject, for the difficulty of painting the character of O'Connell with fairness and impartiality can hardly be exaggerated. "Never, perhaps, was there a man at once so hated and so loved." The mind is bewildered in ranging over the pages of fulsome adulation and rancorous abuse of which he was the object, and which represent him either as a demon or as a god. On the whole, however, the invective greatly preponderates. For many years the entire press of England, and a large section of that of Ireland, was ceaselessly employed in denouncing him. That great journal which he branded as "the Lady of the Strand" scarcely permitted a week to pass without an attack of the most intense virulence, and even now not unfrequently reverts to the subject to plant the nightshade on his grave. All parties in England were combined against him, and in Parliament he had to bear alone the assaults of statesmen and of orators of the most varied opinions. By the more violent Irish Protestants he was regarded with feelings of mingled hatred and terror that almost amounted to a superstition; and to the present

day most families of this kind have their own list of his enormities. Add to this that the last great struggle of his life was a failure, and that there is no country in which success is more constantly regarded as the test of merit than in England.

In describing the career of a man whose life was such a continued controversy, and whose acts are mingled with those of so many who are still living, I shall endeavour to confine myself to the more salient and unquestioned facts, leaving it very much to the reader to deduce the moral.

Daniel O'Connell was born in the county of Kerry in the year 1775. His family was one which had for a long time occupied a prominent position among the Catholics of the county, which was much noted for its national feeling, and, it must be added, greatly addicted to smuggling. It was in after years remarked as a curious coincidence that its crest bore the proud motto, "Oculus O'Connell Salus Hiberniae." During his boyhood the penal laws were still in force, though somewhat relaxed in their stringency, and the poorer Roman Catholics had sunk into that state of degradation which compulsory ignorance necessarily produces, while the richer drew their opinions, with their education, from France. O'Connell spent a year at St. Omer's, where the principal predicted that he would afterwards distinguish himself, and he then remained for a few months at the English College at Douay. The

Revolution had at this time shattered the French church and crown, and the minds of all men were violently agitated in its favour or against it. O'Connell's sympathies were strongly opposed to the movement. Like the members of most Irish families that had adhered to their religion during the penal laws, he was deeply attached to it, politically and through feelings of honour, if not from higher motives. Besides this, the associations of his college were necessarily clerical; and some of the revolutionary soldiers, in passing through Douay, had heaped many insults on the students. On his return to Ireland he found that the contagion of the Revolution had already spread, and in the year '98, when he was called to the bar, rebellion was raging over the country. He became a member of a yeomanry corps which the lawyers had formed, and was at that time, as he afterwards confessed, "almost a Tory." Though he retained to the last his antipathy to rebellion, his opinions in other respects were soon altered by the scandalous scenes of the State Trials, by the spectacle of the condition of his co-religionists, and above all by the circumstances attending the Union.

The Roman Catholics had made some inconsiderable efforts to influence public opinion by a society for the purpose of preparing petitions for Parliament, and of this society he early became a member. His extraordinary eloquence,

his fertility of resources, his sagacity in reading characters and in discerning opportunities, his boundless and ever daring ambition, soon made him the life of this society, and outweighed all the advantages of rank and old services that were sometimes opposed to his views. There is much reason to believe that almost from the commencement of his career he formed one vast scheme of policy which he pursued throughout life with scarcely any deviation. This scheme was to create and lead a public spirit among the Roman Catholics: to wrest emancipation by this means from the Government, to perpetuate the agitation created for that purpose till the Irish Parliament had been restored, to disendow the Established Church, and thus to inaugurate in Ireland a new era, with a separate and independent Parliament and perfect religious equality. It would be difficult to conceive a scheme of policy exhibiting more daring, and, at the same time, more genius than this. The Roman Catholics had hitherto shown themselves absolutely incompetent to take any decisive part in politics. The iron of the penal laws had entered into their very soul, and they had always thrown themselves helplessly on Protestant leaders. Grattan, it is true, was now in the decline of life, but Plunket, who was still in the zenith of his great powers, was ready to succeed him. If the Roman Catholics could be braced up to independent exertion

the noblemen and men of property in their ranks would be their natural leaders, and, at all events, a young lawyer, dependent on his talents and excluded from Parliament and from the higher ranks of his profession, would seem utterly unfitted for such a position. O'Connell, however, perceived that it was possible to bring the whole mass of the people into the struggle, and to give them an almost unexampled momentum and unanimity by applying to politics a great power that lay dormant in Ireland—the power of the Catholic priesthood. To make the priests the rulers of the country and himself the ruler of the priests was his first great object.

Few things are more striking to those who compare the present condition of Ireland with her past, than the rapidity with which the power of the priests has augmented during the present century. Formerly they were much loved by their flocks, but much despised by the Protestants, and they were contented to occupy themselves in keeping alive the spiritual feeling of their people without taking any conspicuous part in politics. Once or twice, indeed, the bishops came forward to disclaim certain monstrous doctrines that were attributed to their Church, and were advanced as an argument against emancipation. Once or twice they held meetings to further the movement by expressing their willingness to cede something to procure the boon. O'Leary

occupied a prominent position in the country, but he owed his influence not to his orders, but to the extreme beauty and purity of his style.

Strange as it may now appear, the priests seem to have been at one time most reluctant to enter into the political arena, and the whole agitation was frequently in danger of perishing from very languor. There was a party supported by Keogh, the leader in '93, who recommended what was called "a dignified silence"—in other words, a complete abstinence from petitioning and agitation. With this party O'Connell successfully grappled. His advice on every occasion was, "Agitate, agitate, agitate!" and Keogh was so irritated by the defeat that he retired from the society. But the greatest of the early triumphs of O'Connell was on the Veto question. It is evident that if the proposed compromise were made, the policy he had laid out for himself would be completely frustrated. A public spirit would not be formed among the Roman Catholics by a protracted struggle. Emancipation would be a boon that was conceded, not a triumph that was won; and the bishops would be in a measure dependent upon the Crown. In the course of the contest almost every element of power seemed against him. The Bishops, in 1799, had passed a resolution implying the veto; and still later, Bishop Milner advocated it, though with some qualifications. The English Roman Catholics led by Mr. Butler, the upper

order of those of Ireland led by Lord Fingall, and the Protestant Liberals led by Grattan, were warmly in favour of it. Sheil, who was thoroughly identified with the Democratic party, and whose wonderful rhetorical powers gave him an extraordinary influence, wrote and spoke in favour of compromise; and, to crown all, Monsignor Quarantotti, who, in a great measure, managed affairs at Rome during the captivity of Pius VII., exhorted the bishops to accept it. Over all these obstacles O'Connell triumphed. He succeeded in persuading the bishops that the question was one of vital importance, and in throwing them on the support of the people. Dr. Milner wrote against the veto, and was accordingly censured by the English Roman Catholics; but O'Connell induced those of Ireland to support him. Grattan refused to place himself in the hands of the Catholic Committee, and the petition was immediately taken out of his hands. Lord Fingall, Sir E. Bellew, and a few other leading Catholics, would not yield, and were obliged to form a separate society, which soon sunk into insignificance. Sheil was answered by O'Connell, and the answer was accepted by the people as conclusive; and, finally, the rescript of Quarantotti was disobeyed by the bishops and disavowed by the Pope. The results of the controversy were, that opinions on both sides had been so expressed that compromise was impossible —that the clergy were brought actively into

politics—that the lower orders were stirred by the movement to the very depths—and that O'Connell was triumphant over all rivals.

In the course of this controversy it was frequently urged that O'Connell's policy retarded emancipation. This objection he met with characteristic frankness. He avowed himself repeatedly to be an agitator with an "ulterior object," and declared that that object was the repeal of the Union. "Desiring as I do the repeal of the Union," he said in one of his speeches, in 1813, "I rejoice to see how our enemies promote that great object. Yes, they promote its inevitable success by their very hostility to Ireland. They delay the liberties of the Catholics, but they compensate us most amply because they advance the restoration of Ireland. By leaving one cause of agitation, they have created, and they will embody and give shape and form to, a public mind and a public spirit." In 1811, at a political dinner, he spoke to the toast of Repeal, which had been given at his suggestion, and he repeatedly reverted to the subject. Nothing can be more untrue than to represent the repeal agitation as a mere afterthought designed to sustain his flagging popularity. Nor can it be said that the project was first started by him. The deep indignation that the Union had produced in Ireland was fermenting among all classes, and assuming the form, sometimes of a French party, sometimes of a social

war, and sometimes of a constitutional agitation. Those who were guided chiefly by considerations of nationality were almost unanimous in denouncing the measure, while to those who regulated their policy exclusively by material considerations, the evils that it had done to the metropolis were far more manifest than the benefits it was said to have conferred upon the trade. The Repeal agitation directed but did not create the national feeling. It merely gave it a distinct form, a steady action, and a constitutional character. In 1810 a very remarkable movement in this direction took place in Dublin. The grand jury passed a resolution declaring that "the Union had produced an accumulation of distress; and that, instead of cementing, they found that, if not repealed, it might endanger the connection between the sister countries." In the same year a meeting communicated on the subject with Grattan, who was member for the city. Grattan replied, that a Repeal agitation could only be successful if supported by the people; that if that support were given, he would be ready to advocate the movement; and that he considered that such a course would be perfectly consonant with devoted attachment to the connection.* Lord Cloncurry

* Grattan's letter is so remarkable, that we give it in full. It will be found in his Life, by his son :—

"Gentlemen,—I had the honour to receive an address, presented by your committee, and expressive of their wishes

relates that he was a member of a deputation which on another occasion waited on Grattan, and that Grattan said to them, "Gentlemen, the best advice I can give my fellow-citizens upon every occasion is to keep knocking at the Union."

The prominent position O'Connell had assumed in politics naturally exercised a favourable influence upon his professional career, so that he became by far the most popular counsel in Ireland, and was invariably employed in all those cases which involved political or religious considerations. There have been several lawyers of deeper knowledge and of more powerful eloquence, though he undoubtedly ranked high in both respects; but never, perhaps, was there a man more admirably

that I should present certain petitions and support the repeal of an act, entitled the 'Act of Union,' and your committee adds, that it speaks with the authority of my constituents, the freemen and freeholders of the City of Dublin. I beg to assure your committee, and through them, my much beloved and much respected constituents, that I shall accede to their proposition. I shall present their petitions and support the repeal of the Act of Union with a decided attachment to our connection with Great Britain, and to that harmony between the two countries, without which the connection cannot last. I do not impair either, as I apprehend, when I assure you that I shall support the Repeal of the Act of Union. You will please to observe, that a proposition of that sort in Parliament, to be either prudent or possible, must wait until it should be called for and backed by the nation. When proposed, I shall then, as at all other times I hope I shall, prove myself an Irishman, and that Irishman whose first and last passion was his native country."

calculated to excel at the Irish bar. His extraordinary knowledge of the Irish character, his almost miraculous sagacity in detecting the weaknesses of the judges, jurymen, and witnesses, the wonderful dexterity with which he could avail himself of any legal quibble or ambiguity, and the unblushing audacity with which he could confront any opponent, enabled him quickly to distance all competitors. It is difficult for those who are habituated only to the law-courts of England, to conceive the vast difference in this respect between the two countries. The animated character of every discussion, the marvellous evasive powers of the Irish witness, and the keen perception of the ridiculous manifested by all parties, are in themselves sufficient to constitute a broad distinction. But this is, unhappily, not all. The proceedings of the Irish law-courts have ever been deeply tinged with religious and political considerations. The appointments of judges and of law-officers are subjects of perpetual and acrimonious controversy. The first question asked by the public seems to be their religion, the second their politics, the last their legal knowledge. The Irish judges were removable till nearly the close of the last century; and, after the Union, a number of men were raised to the bench on account of their vote, who were notoriously unfitted to dispense justice either with knowledge or with impartiality. Besides this, an unusual proportion of the leading

politicians of Ireland have been practising barristers, and the temptation of making a trial, or a question of tithes, or tenant-right, or libel, an occasion for a brilliant display was irresistible, both to the politician and to the orator. As trials of this nature were continually occurring, and as their exclusion from the inner bar and from the bench gave the Roman Catholics a tenfold virulence, the scenes which took place at the Four Courts during the earlier part of the century may be more easily conceived than described. O'Connell always defended the excessive violence of his language, both at the bar and on the platform, on the ground of the peculiar position of the Roman Catholics. He said that he had found his co-religionists as broken in spirit as they were in fortune; that they had adopted the tone of the weakest mendicants; that they seemed ever fearful of wearying the dominant caste by their importunity, and that they were utterly unmindful of their power and of their rights. The easiest way of breaking the spell that bound them was to adopt a defiant and an overbearing tone. The spectacle of a Roman Catholic fearlessly assailing the highest in the land with the fiercest invective and the most unceremonious ridicule, was eminently calculated to invigorate a cowering people. A tone of extreme violence was the best corrective for a spirit of extreme servility. There is undoubtedly much truth in these considerations,

and they extenuate not a little the language of O'Connell, but we do not think that they justify it, either morally or politically. The ceaseless torrent of the coarsest abuse which he poured upon all opponents, the ludicrous rapidity with which he passed on the slightest provocation from a tone of the most hyperbolical praise to language that was worthy of Billingsgate, and the virulence with which he attacked some of the most illustrious characters in the country, prejudiced all moderate men against him. It was said of him that his mind consisted of two compartments: the one inhabited by the purest angels, and the other by the vilest demons, and that the occupation of his life was to transfer his friends from the one to the other. A man who applied to his opponents such terms as "a mighty big liar," or "a lineal descendent of the impenitent thief," or "a titled buffoon," or "a contumelious cur," or "a pig," or "an indescribable wretch," placed himself beyond the pale of courtesy. Such language could not fail to involve him in innumerable quarrels, and to lower the character of the movement. A Parliamentary debater and a man of unpopular opinions should have been especially cautious never to lose his self-respect, or to give his opponents an opportunity of dismissing his arguments on the score of his insults. That tone of gentlemanly moderation, that well-bred, pungent raillery that is so charac-

teristic of the English Parliament, and has been brought to the greatest perfection by Lord Palmerston, is a more efficient weapon of debate than the most splendid eloquence or the most trenchant wit. It draws a magic circle around the speaker, which only similar weapons can penetrate, and it seldom fails to secure the attention and the respect of the public.

The greatest speeches of O'Connell at the bar were in defence of Magee, the editor of the 'Evening Post,' who had libelled the Duke of Richmond. They consist chiefly of an invective against Saurin, the Attorney-General, as the representative of the Orange party, and were so violent that the publication of one of them was pronounced to be an aggravation of the original libel. In point of eloquence, however, they rank very high; but they are almost exclusively political, for the case of his client was a hopeless one. The principal success of O'Connell at the bar was, perhaps, not in oratory, but in cross-examining. He had paid special attention to this department, which naturally fell, in a great measure, to the Roman Catholic lawyers, at a time when they were excluded from the inner bar; and he is said to have brought it to a degree of perfection almost unparalleled in Ireland. His wonderful insight into character, and tact in managing different temperaments, enabled him to unravel the intricacies of

deceit with a rapidity and a certainty that seemed miraculous, and his biographies are full of almost incredible illustrations of his skill.

It would be tedious to follow into minute detail the difficulties and the mistakes that obstructed the Catholic movement, and were finally overcome by the perseverance of O'Connell. For some time the gravest fears were entertained that the Pope would pronounce in favour of the veto. A strong party at Rome, headed by Cardinal Gonsalvi, was known to advocate it, and the deputy of the Irish bishops adopted so importunate a tone that he was peremptorily dismissed, and pronounced by his Holiness to be "intolerable." Innumerable dissensions dislocated the movement, and demanded all the efforts of O'Connell to appease them. When the Roman Catholic gentry had seceded, a multitude of those eccentric characters who are ever ready to embark in agitation, from the mere spirit of adventure, assumed a dangerous prominence, and it was found necessary to adopt a most despotic tone to repress them. The hopes that were entertained of the Prince of Wales produced a great deal of excessive flattery, and when the change in his sentiments became known, some most injudicious resolutions ascribing it to "the fatal witchery of an unworthy secret influence." When he visited Ireland after his coronation, the unbounded flattery of some of the Orange-men on one side, and of O'Connell on the other,

furnished a too faithful illustration of Swift's saying, that "Loyalty is the foible of the Irish." It is difficult to read without indignation the account of the almost adoring homage paid to one of the most faithless and immoral men who ever sat upon the British throne. Lord Byron, who took a strong interest in the Catholic cause, which he defended in the House of Lords, was justly indignant, and branded the conduct of O'Connell with great severity in the 'Irish Avatar.'

In 1815 O'Connell fought a duel with a gentleman named D'Esterre, which was attended by some very painful circumstances, and gave rise to much subsequent discussion. It arose out of the epithet "beggarly" which O'Connell had applied to the corporation of Dublin. D'Esterre was killed at the first shot. In the same year Mr. Peel challenged O'Connell on account of some violent expressions he had employed. O'Connell, however, was very opportunely arrested at his wife's information, and bound over to keep the peace.

Several times the movement was menaced by Government proclamations and prosecutions. Its great difficulty was to bring the public opinion of the whole body of the Roman Catholics actively and habitually into the question. The simplest way of accomplishing this seemed to be a system of delegates, but this had been rendered illegal by the Convention Act. On the other hand, the right of petitioning was one of the fundamental

principles of the constitution. By availing himself of this right O'Connell continued, with great dexterity, to violate continually the spirit of the Convention Act, while keeping within the letter of the law. Proclamation after proclamation was launched against his society, but by continually changing its name and its form he generally succeeded in evading the prosecutions of the Government.

These early Societies, however, all sink into insignificance compared with that great Catholic Association which was formed in 1824. The avowed objects of this society were to promote religious education, to ascertain the numerical strength of the different religions, and to answer the charges against the Roman Catholics embodied in the hostile petitions. They also *recommended* petitions (unconnected with the society) from every parish, and aggregate meetings in every county. It is unnecessary to say that the real object of the society was to form a gigantic system of organization, ramifying over the entire country, and directed in every parish by the priests, for the purpose of petitioning and in every other way agitating in favour of emancipation. The Catholic Rent was instituted at this time, and it formed at once a powerful instrument of cohesion, and a faithful barometer of the popular feeling. It is curious that at the first two meetings O'Connell was unable to obtain the attendance of ten mem-

bers to form a quorum. On the third day the same difficulty at first occurred, but O'Connell at length induced two Maynooth students who were passing to make up the requisite number. There was something very significant in the introduction of the clerical element having set the machine in motion. Very soon, however, the importance of the new society became manifested. The people were organized with an almost unprecedented rapidity, and O'Connell and Sheil traversed the country in all directions to address the people. It was before the immense audiences that were thus collected that their wonderful eloquence became conspicuous.

Though both were marvellously successful in swaying and in fascinating the multitude, it would be difficult to conceive a greater contrast than was presented by their styles.

Richard Lalor Sheil forms one of the many examples history presents of splendid oratorical powers clogged by insuperable natural defects. His person was diminutive, and wholly devoid of dignity. His voice shrill, harsh, and often rising into a positive shriek; his action, when most natural, violent without gracefulness, and eccentric even to absurdity. He had distinguished himself not a little as a poet and a dramatist, and had acquired a passion for ornamentation which frequently gave his speeches a tawdry and over-studied appearance. They seem exactly to fulfil

Burke's description of perfect oratory, "half poetry, half prose;" yet we feel that their ornaments, however beautiful in themselves, offend by their profusion. Two very high excellences he possessed to the most wonderful degree—the power of combining extreme preparation with the greatest passion, and of blending argument with declamation. We know scarcely any speaker from whom it would be possible to cite so many passages with all the sustained rhythm and flow of declamation, yet consisting wholly of the most elaborate arguments. He was a great master of irony, and, unlike O'Connell, could adapt it either to a vulgar or to a refined audience. He had but little readiness, and almost always prepared the language as well as the substance of his speeches; but he seems to have carefully followed the example of Cicero in studying the case of his opponents as fully as his own, and was thus enabled to anticipate with great accuracy the course of the debate. He was more calculated to please than to move, and to dazzle than to convince.

In almost every respect O'Connell differed from Sheil. Had he been a man of second-rate talent he would have imitated some of the great orators who adorned the Irish Parliament; he would have studied epigram like Grattan, or irony like Plunkett, or polished declamation like Curran. He seemed, however, to have early felt that neither the character of his mind nor the career

he had chosen were propitious for those forms of eloquence, while he was eminently fitted to excel in other ways. He possessed a voice of almost unexampled perfection. Rising with an easy and melodious swell, it filled the largest building, and triumphed over the wildest tumult, while at the same time it conveyed every inflection of feeling with the most delicate flexibility. It was equally suited for impassioned appeal, for graphic narrative, and for sweeping the finer chords of pathos and of sensibility. He had studied carefully that consummate master of elocution William Pitt, and he had acquired an almost equal skill. No one knew better how to pass from impetuous denunciation to a tone of subdued but thrilling tenderness. No one quoted poetry with greater feeling and effect; no one had more completely mastered the art of adapting his voice to his audience, and of terminating a long sentence without effort and without feebleness. His action was so easy, natural, and suited to his subject, that it almost escaped the notice of the observer. His language was clear, nervous, and fluent, but often incorrect, and scarcely ever polished. He had but little of the pride of the orator, and readily sacrificed all the graces of style in order to produce an immediate effect. "A great speech," he used to say, "is a very fine thing, but, after all, the verdict is the thing." We find accordingly that he was frequently betrayed into vulgar expressions, into

coarse humour, and undignified illustrations; while at the same time he seldom failed to make a visible impression.* His readiness in reply was boundless, his arguments were stated with almost unequalled force, and his narrative was always lucid and vivid. If he endeavoured to become eloquent by preparation, he grew turgid and bombastic; if he relied exclusively on the feelings of the moment, he often rose to a strain of masculine beauty that was all the more forcible from its being evidently unprepared. His bursts of passion displayed that freshness and genuine character that art can so seldom counterfeit. The listener seemed almost to follow the workings of his mind—to perceive him hewing his thoughts into rhetoric with a negligent but colossal grandeur, with the chisel, not of a Canova, but of a Michael Angelo. Were we to analyse the pleasure we derive from the speeches of a brilliant orator, we should probably find that one great source is this constant perception of an ever-recurring difficulty skilfully overcome. With some speakers appropriate language flows forth in such a rapid and unbroken stream, that the charm of art is lost by its very perfection. With others the difficulties of expression are so painfully exhibited or so imperfectly overcome, we listen with feelings of apprehension and of pity.

* Sheil complained that he often "threw a brood of sturdy young ideas upon the world without a rag to cover them."

But when the happy medium is attained—when the idea that is to be conveyed is present for a moment to the listener's thought before it is moulded into the stately period—when we seem to peer into the speaker's mind, and to witness the perpetual effort without pain, and the perpetual struggle without danger—the music of each balanced sentence acquires an additional charm from our perception of the labour that produced it. In addressing the populace the great talents of O'Connell shone forth with their full resplendency. Such an audience alone is susceptible of the intense feelings the orator seeks to convey, and over such an audience O'Connell exercised an unbounded influence. Tens of thousands hung entranced upon his accents, melted into tears, or convulsed with laughter—fired with the most impassioned and indignant enthusiasm, yet so restrained, that not an act of riot or of lawlessness, not a scene of drunkenness or of disorder, resulted from those vast assemblies. His genius was more wonderful in controlling than in exciting, and there was no chord of feeling that he could not strike with power. Other orators studied rhetoric—O'Connell studied man.

If we compare the two speakers we should say that before an uneducated audience O'Connell was wholly unrivalled, while before an educated audience Sheil was most fitted to please and O'Connell to convince. Both were powerful

reasoners, but the arguments of O'Connell stood in bold and clear relief, while the attention was diverted from those of Sheil by the ornaments and mannerism that accompanied them. Both possessed much humour, but that of O'Connell was always coarse and generally virulent, while that of Sheil was refined, pungent, and good-natured. By too great preparation Sheil's speeches displayed sometimes an excess of brilliancy. By elaborate preparation O'Connell invariably became absurd. O'Connell was much the greatest debater, Sheil was much the greatest master of composition. O'Connell possessed the most vigorous intellect, and Sheil the most correct taste.

The success of the Catholic Association became every week more striking. The rent rose with an extraordinary rapidity. The meetings in every county grew more and more enthusiastic, the triumph of priestly influence became more and more certain. A Liberal Government made a feeble and abortive effort to arrest the storm by threatening both O'Connell and Sheil with prosecution for certain passages in their speeches. The sentence cited from O'Connell was one in which he expressed a hope that "if Ireland were driven mad by persecution a new Bolivar might arise," but the employment of this language was not clearly established, and the bill was thrown out. The speech which was to have drawn a pro-

secution upon Sheil was a kind of dissertation upon ' Wolfe Tone's Memoirs,' of which Canning afterwards said that it might have been delivered in Parliament without even eliciting a call to order. The Attorney-General was Plunket, who by this act completed the destruction of his influence in Ireland. Sheil asked him, as a single favour, to conduct the prosecution in person. Had he done so Sheil intended to cite the passages from Plunket's speeches in 'The Union,' which at least equalled in violence any that the Repealers ever delivered. The dissolution of the Government prevented the intended prosecution.

One very serious consequence of the resistance to the demand for emancipation was the strengthening of the sympathy between Ireland and France. The French education of many of the Irish priests, and the prominent position of France among Roman Catholic nations, had naturally elicited and sustained it. The sagacity of O'Connell readily perceived what a powerful auxiliary foreign opinion would be to his cause; and by sending the resolutions of the Association to Catholic governments, by translations of the debates, and by a series of French letters written by Sheil, the feeling was constantly fanned. Many Irishmen have believed that the existence of this sympathy is an evil. We confess we can hardly think so. That a French invasion of Ireland would be, under any circumstances, and to all parties, a

calamity, may be readily admitted ; but in the present day the influence of nations depends much less on their arms than on the weight of their opinions. Irishmen can never forget how, in the hour of their deepest distress, when their energies were paralysed by a persecuting code, and their land wasted by confiscation and by war, France opened her ranks to receive them, and afforded them the shelter they were refused at home. They cannot forget that, while in England the character of their nation has been the continual object of ridicule and of calumny, while its wrongs have been studiously suppressed and its follies unsparingly recounted, while the ceaseless object of the leading journals, and of some of the leading writers, has been to represent it before Europe as despicable, weak-minded, and unreasoning, it has never wanted defenders among the writers of France. Whatever school of politics they may belong to, whatever estimate of Irish prospects they may adopt—whether they write as religionists like Montalembert, or as philosophers like Gustave de Beaumont, or as constitutional politicians in the ‘*Revue des deux Mondes*’—they have uniformly treated Irish affairs with kindness, fairness, and delicacy. We do not envy the Irishman who contrasts the noble and generous tone adopted by these writers with the supercilious and acrid language of the British press, and then joins in the anti-Gallican rant that is so popular on the

hustings of England. One of the most precious possessions of a nation is its character: English writers have systematically vilified that of Ireland; French writers have uniformly defended it. We may regret the general direction of French policy—we may protest against its too frequent preference of glory to honour, and of aggrandizement to freedom—we may above all disclaim, with the full emphasis of conviction, the slightest desire to witness an armed intervention, but we must at the same time remember that we owe France a deep debt of gratitude, and we must ever regard her triumphs and her prosperity as the prosperity and the triumphs of a friend. It is, we conceive, a matter of the deepest congratulation that Ireland should have found her defenders in a nation which, from the charm of its language, the genius of its writers, and the expansive and fascinating character of its politics, exercises beyond all comparison the greatest influence over the opinions of Europe.

But there is another reason not less weighty than the preceding. In the present diseased state of public opinion, while the bulk of the people are entirely subject to a bigoted priesthood, and their policy dictated by a blind and perpetual opposition to England, there is the greatest danger of their becoming identified with the retrogressive party in Europe. To this party the priesthood naturally gravitates; to this party hatred of Eng-

land is ever likely to drive the people. The one effectual corrective is sympathy with France; for France, while diverging widely from the policy of England, is always liberal and progressive. There are, doubtless, dangers resulting from that sympathy, but we believe it to be far preferable to sympathy with Rome, with Austria, or with Spain.

The formation of the Wellington Ministry seemed effectually to crush the present hopes of the Catholics, for the stubborn resolution of its leader was as well known as his Tory opinions. Yet this Ministry was destined to terminate the long contest, by establishing the principle of religious equality. The first great concession was obtained by Lord John Russell, and consisted of the admission of the Dissenters to the privileges of the Constitution. By this concession the old principle of Toryism was finally surrendered. The Tory theory was that the whole State should be regarded as a single individual, professing a single religion—that of the Established Church; that no one should form part of the Legislature, or should obtain any office under the State, who did not subscribe to this religion; and that other creeds should be altogether unrecognised and unrepresented. It was often urged, indeed, that this theory was very gratuitous and unsupported, and that it was hard to exclude men from a substantial privilege on account of what was chiefly a matter

of sentiment. It was maintained, too, that in consistency it should be carried a step further, and that the taxes—which form the life-blood of the Government—should be derived exclusively from orthodox sources. The theory, however, had at all events a fascination to many minds, and it formed a definite ground of policy. We find it accordingly to have been the essence of Toryism for many generations. Since its destruction the Tories have had no positive principle, except during the short battle between Protection and Free Trade. They have done good service as a kind of drag, preventing power from descending too precipitately towards the lower orders; but their office has been almost entirely negative and obstructive. The Roman Catholics, under the guidance of O'Connell, had warmly assisted the efforts of the Dissenters, but the Dissenters almost uniformly opposed the Catholic cause. They have been, in consequence, bitterly accused of ingratitude, but we think very unjustly. According to their estimate of the doctrines of Rome, and of the functions of Government, the admission of Roman Catholics to Parliament would be positively sinful. Their principle may have been untrue and absurd, but they were quite right in not sacrificing it to their gratitude.

About this time a new project of compromise was much discussed both in Parliament and by the public, which shows clearly how greatly the

prospects of the cause had improved. This project was, that the emancipation should be accompanied by the payment of the clergy by the State, and by the disfranchisement of the 40s. freeholders. It seems to have been very generally felt that while Emancipation could not be long delayed, some measure should be taken to prevent the Roman Catholic body from being virtually independent of the Crown. It was felt that a body which was connected by interests, by sympathies, and allegiance with a foreign Court, might become very dangerous in Parliament. To pay the Roman Catholic clergy would be to unite them by a strong tie to England, and to place them in a measure under the control of the Government. It would also, in all probability, set at rest the long vexed question of the Established Church. Pitt is said to have contemplated the measure, and it found many very able advocates in England. O'Connell

at first thought that the clergy should demand this arrangement, but, on their vehement opposition, he renounced the idea. In 1837 he had a warm controversy on the subject with Mr. Smith O'Brien, who contended payment. Each, we think, was right. O'Brien, on his own point of view, only to the interests of his country, and not to the interests of his Church. It may have been, in a great measure, but the Roman Catholic *feel* when resting

exclusively on the people, possessing all the authority of independence, and all the majesty of poverty. It is impossible in fairness to deny that the tone of the Roman Catholic priests on this matter was very noble. They proved themselves as incorruptible as they were poor, and it has ever been felt since then, that though willing to resort to any means to increase the power of their Church, they can never be actuated by sordid personal motives. Their conduct has, in this respect, been above suspicion. This is one of the chief sources of their power.

On the accession of the Wellington Ministry to power the Catholic Association passed a resolution to the effect that they would oppose with their whole energy any Irish member who consented to accept office under it. When the Test and Corporation Acts were repealed Lord John Russell advised the withdrawal of this resolution, and O'Connell, who, at that time, usually acted as moderator, was inclined to comply. Fortunately, however, his opinion was overruled. An opportunity for carrying the resolution into effect soon occurred. Mr. Fitzgerald, the member for Clare, accepted the office of President of the Board of Trade, and was consequently obliged to go to his constituents for re-election. An attempt was made to induce a Major Macnamara to oppose him, but it failed at the last moment, and then O'Connell adopted the bold resolution of standing himself.

The excitement at this announcement rose at once to fever height. It extended over every part of Ireland, and penetrated every class of society. The whole mass of the Roman Catholics prepared to support him, and the vast system of organization which he had framed acted effectually in every direction. He went down to the field of battle, accompanied by Sheil, by the well-known Father Maguire,* and by Steele and O'Gorman Mahon, two very ardent but eccentric Repealers, who proposed and seconded him. Mr. Steele began operations by offering to fight a duel with any landlord who was aggrieved at the interference with his tenants—a very judicious proceeding, which seems to have greatly simplified the contest. O'Connell, Sheil, and Father Maguire, flew over the country haranguing the people. The priests addressed the parishioners with impassioned zeal from the altar—they called on them as they valued their immortal souls—as they would avoid the

* One of the keenest sportsmen and one of the ablest controversialists in Ireland. It is hard to say whether he owed most of his popularity to his great eloquence or to his extraordinary capacity for drinking whisky-punch. He held two very long controversies on the differences between his Church and Protestantism ; one with the famous Dr. Tresham Gregg, the other with Mr. Pope, a very eloquent and excellent Protestant clergyman. The latter controversy deserves to be specially commemorated. Both parties preserved their temper throughout. Both signed the published report of their controversy. It would be difficult to find a parallel to this in the annals of the controversy.

doom of the apostate and the renegade, to stand firm to the banner of their faith. Robed in the sacred vestments, bearing aloft the image of their God, they passed from rank to rank, stimulating the apathetic, encouraging the faint-hearted, and imprecating dark curses on the recreant. They breathed the martyr-spirit into their people, and persuaded them that their cause was as sacred as that of the early Christians. They opposed the spell of religion to the spell of feudalism—the traditions of the chapel to the traditions of the hall.

The landlords, on the other hand, were equally resolute. They were indignant at a body of men who had no connection with the county presuming to dictate to their tenants. They protested vehemently against the introduction of spiritual influence into a political election, and against the ingratitude manifested towards a tried and upright member. Mr. Fitzgerald had always been a supporter of the Catholic cause. He was an accomplished speaker, a man of unquestioned integrity, and of most fascinating and polished manners. His father—who was at this time lying on his death-bed—had been one of those members of the Irish Parliament who had resisted all the offers and all the persuasions of the Ministry, and had recorded their votes against the Union. The landlords were to a man in his favour. Sir Edward O'Brien, the father of Mr. Smith O'Brien, and the leading landlord, pro-

posed him, and almost all the men of weight and reputation in the county surrounded him on the hustings; nor did he prove unworthy of the contest. His speech was a model of good taste, of popular reasoning, and of touching appeal. He recounted his services and the services of his father, and, as he touched with delicate pathos on this latter subject, his voice faltered and his countenance betrayed so genuine an emotion that a kindred feeling passed through all his hearers. He rose to address the bitterest enemies, he sat down amidst almost unanimous applause. The effect of his speech was, however, soon counteracted by O'Connell, who exerted himself to the utmost on the occasion, and withheld no invective and no sarcasm that could subserve his cause. After two or three days' polling the victory was decided, and Mr. Fitzgerald withdrew from the contest.

Ireland was now on the very verge of revolution. The whole mass of the people had been organized like a regular army, and taught to act with the most perfect unanimity. Adopting a suggestion of Sheil's, they were accustomed to assemble in every part of the country on the same day, and scarcely an adult Catholic abstained from the movement. In 1828, it was computed that in a single day two thousand meetings were held. In the same year Lord Anglesea had written to Sir Robert Peel, stating

that the priests were working most effectually on the Catholics of the army ; that it was reported that many of them were ill-disposed, and that it was important to remove the dépôts of recruits, and supply their place by English or Scotch men. The contagion of the movement had thoroughly infected the whole population, and on the triumph of O'Connell popular feeling burst forth in such a peal of jubilant defiance that the Ministers felt that the battle was won, and they brought in the Emancipation Bill, confessedly because to withhold it would be to kindle a rebellion that would extend over the length and breadth of the land.

It was thus that this great victory was won by the unaided genius of a single man, who had entered on the contest without any advantage of rank, or wealth, or influence, who had maintained it from no prouder eminence than the platform of the demagogue, and who terminated it without the effusion of a single drop of blood. All the eloquence of Grattan and of Plunket, all the influence of Pitt and of Canning, had proved ineffectual. Toryism had evoked the dark spirit of religious intolerance. The pulpits of England resounded with denunciations ; the evangelical movement had roused the fierce passions of Puritanism ; yet all succumbed before the genius of this young lawyer. The most eminent advocates of emancipation had almost all fallen away from and disavowed him. He had devised

the organisation that gave such weight to public opinion ; he had created the enthusiasm that inspired it ; he had applied to political affairs the priestly influence that consecrated it. With the exception of Sheil, no man of commanding talent shared his labours, and Sheil was conspicuous only as a rhetorician. He gained this victory not by stimulating the courage of the advocates of the measure in Parliament, but by creating another system of government in Ireland which overawed all his opponents. He gained it at a time when his bitterest enemies held the reins of power, and when they were guided by the greatest statesman who had arisen since Pitt, and by one of the most stubborn wills that ever directed the affairs of the nation. If he had never arisen, emancipation would doubtless have been at length conceded, but it would have been conceded accompanied by the veto. It would have been a boon given to a suppliant and a prostrate people. It would have been the favour of the superior towards the slave. It was the glory of O'Connell that his Church entered into the constitution triumphant and unshackled—an object of fear and not of contempt—a power that could visibly affect the policy of the empire.

The Relief Bill of 1829 marks a great social revolution in Ireland—the substitution of the priests for the landlords as the leaders of the people. For a long time a kind of feudal system had existed,

under which the people were drawn in the closest manner to the landlords. The Irish landlords, as a class, seem to have been eminently fitted, both by their virtues and their vices, to attain to great popularity. They were men of most reckless improvidence, of the wildest dissipation, but of almost invariable amiability and kindness. Their life passed in cockfights and hunts, in duels and in drunken revels—but also in the exercise of the most boundless hospitality, and the most lavish generosity. They seem to have been very free from those sensual vices and from that gross ignorance which are the usual accompaniments of such a life. Sensuality has never been the besetting sin of the Irish ; and the national passion for witty society, the classical eloquence of the parliamentary orators, and the almost universal love of theatrical amusement, which was one great cause of that eloquence, had all given a somewhat intellectual character to the upper orders. Men such as I have described will always be popular with the people, and more especially in Ireland. Their irregularities were pardoned on the score of their generosity. Their vices were of a kind that did little harm to their neighbours. Their virtues were of the most fascinating and attractive order. Their tenants regarded them with feelings of feudal affection. They did not expect their landlord to do much to improve them intellectually or morally, but they knew that he would defend them in their

need—that he would look with a very lenient eye on their shortcomings, and that he would never repel them by an assumption of dignity. They could always find themselves at home in his hall ; and on the other hand they took care that no bailiff could with safety enter the estate, and that no retainer was absent from the hustings on the day of election. The priest preached peacefully to his people, and the minister to his pews, and on occasions of episcopal visitations the former is said to have sometimes lent the latter a congregation.

This state of things was not, it is true, by any means universal. On the contrary, the White Boys and other predators of the last century directed their animosity chiefly against the landlords, but at the same time it does not appear to have been the general antagonism of classes which we find at present. It is, indeed, astonishing that with such a system of legislation as the penal code, and such a system of church revenue as the tithes, there should have been so little agitation and agrarian crime. Extreme ignorance and the depression caused by centuries of mis-government had doubtless done much to prevent these ebullitions, but we think another at least as powerful cause was the general popularity of the landlords as individuals. Good-nature is perhaps the characteristic virtue of the Irish people, and if it is not one of the highest, it is certainly one of the most useful qualities that a

nation can possess. It will soften the burden of the most oppressive laws, and of the most abject poverty, and the only evil before which it is powerless is sectarian zeal. O'Connell evoked that zeal, and the bond between landlord and tenant was broken. "I have polled all the gentry and all the 50*l.* freeholders," wrote Mr. Fitzgerald to Sir Robert Peel, when giving an account of his defeat, "the gentry to a man." We are very far from thinking that this severance was for the advantage of Ireland, but, as we have before observed, we must regard O'Connell as a man whose first object was to increase the influence of his Church.

When introducing the Roman Catholics to Parliament, the Ministers brought forward two or three measures with the object of diminishing their power, the only one of any importance being the disfranchisement of the 40*s.* freeholders. This measure greatly lessened the proportion of the Roman Catholic electors ; it struck off a number of men who were far too ignorant to form independent opinions, and it checked the tendency to the excessive subdivision of lands that has always been so fatal to Ireland. It would have been well if the Ministers had stopped here, but with an infatuation that seems scarcely credible, they proceeded to adopt a series of measures which had the effect of irritating the Roman Catholics to the utmost, without in any degree diminishing their power, and of completely preventing the pacific

effects that concession might naturally have had. Their first act was to refuse to admit O'Connell into Parliament without re-election, on the ground that the Emancipation Act had passed since his election. It was felt that this refusal was purely political, and designed to mark their reprobation of his career. It was, of course, utterly impotent, for O'Connell was at once re-elected ; but it was accepted by the whole people as an insult and a defiance. O'Connell himself was extremely irritated, and for a long time his antipathy to Sir Robert Peel was of the bitterest and most personal character. He said of him that " his smile was like the silver plate on a coffin." There was, perhaps, no single measure that did so much to foster the feeling of discontent in Ireland as this paltry and irrational proceeding.

It was succeeded by another indication of the same spirit. By the Emancipation Act the higher positions in the bar were thrown open, as well as the Parliament. A distribution of silk gowns naturally followed ; and, while several Roman Catholic barristers obtained this distinction, O'Connell, who occupied the foremost position, was passed over. Among those who were promoted was Sheil, who had co-operated with him through the whole struggle. It now, too, became manifest that the Tories were determined to render the Emancipation Act as nugatory as was possible,

by never promoting a Roman Catholic to the bench. For some time under this rule the exclusion was absolute. Even in 1833, there was no Roman Catholic judge or stipendiary magistrate. The consequence of all this was, that the people remained as discontented as ever. O'Connell declared that justice to Ireland was not to be obtained from an English Parliament, and the tide of popular feeling set in with irresistible force towards Repeal. It was Toryism that had elicited this feeling, by its ceaseless opposition to all concessions. It was Tory orators who had given it the character of a religious war, by pandering to the bigotry of Orangeism ; it was Tory ministers who prevented its subsiding, by accompanying their concession with insult, and by exhibiting their rancour with their weakness.

O'Connell, however, refused to enter at once into the repeal agitation. Contrary to the wish of a vast proportion of his followers, he determined to abstain for six years, in order to test the effect of emancipation upon the policy of the Imperial Parliament. The Reform question was at this time rising to its height. O'Connell advocated the most extreme Radical views, and, in 1830, brought in a bill for universal suffrage, triennial parliaments, and the ballot. He wrote a series of letters on the question. He brought the whole force of his influence to act upon it, and it was his

followers who turned the balance in favour of reform. One of the first acts of the reformed Parliament was to pass a Coercion Bill for Ireland.

The social condition of Ireland was at this time most deplorable. Agrarian outrages and tithe riots were of almost daily occurrence. Secret societies were organised, and ramified over the whole country. Suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act, coercion bills, and all kinds of exceptional legislation were habitual, and were directed at once against criminal and against constitutional agitation. In one sense this state of things may be ascribed to O'Connell. He had undoubtedly awokened the Roman Catholics out of the torpor that had so long oppressed them; he had made them sensible of their wrongs; he had taught them to look to themselves for a remedy. On the other hand he uniformly denounced secret societies with the most unqualified vehemence, and represented them as the most fatal obstacle to his policy. "He who commits a crime," he exclaimed, "adds strength to the enemy." Nothing could be more opposed to the spirit of his agitation than these societies, and he had no more formidable obstacles to encounter than the coercion bills, of which they were the pretext.

These riots seemed principally due to ecclesiastical causes. The ecclesiastical system of Ireland, indeed, had at this time no parallel. Almost the whole of the poorer population were

Roman Catholics, and they were compelled to support the hostile and aggressive Church of the rich minority. By the tithe-laws the Protestant clergymen were empowered to seize every tenth cow, pig, or sheep, while the peasant constantly resisted the attempt. The reverend collector was compelled to enforce his rights surrounded by police, and armed to the teeth; and, when he had succeeded in capturing his prey, it often proved worthless, for the peasant branded the word "tithes" upon it, which effectually prevented its sale. Grattan had vehemently denounced the system. The clerical organs as vehemently defended it. It was urged on the one side that a tithe-system existed among the Jews, and that to consecrate in this manner to religion a certain fixed proportion of all the produce of the land must be especially pleasing to the Almighty. It was argued on the other side that there were many material differences between the Levitical and the Irish tithe-systems; and that, while the latter continued, the evil effects of the riots were so much greater than the good effects of the moral teaching of the Church, that the presence of a clergyman was sufficient to demoralize an entire district.

The education of the people was chiefly entrusted to the Kildare-street Society, by which the Protestant Bible was taught to all the pupils, and which was therefore essentially sectional.

As we are not writing a history of Ireland, we shall only advert very briefly to the Government measures to lighten these evils. The Maynooth Grant had been first passed by the Irish Parliament for the purpose of removing the priests from France. It afforded them, undoubtedly, a great relief, but it lowered their position as a class, and it certainly did not do much to increase their loyalty. It was only passed from year to year. Sir Robert Peel increased its amount and made it permanent. It was hoped that by this means the evils of an annual debate would be avoided—a hope which has not been realized.

The Kildare-street Society was superseded by the present system of national education. This system was originally devised by Lord Anglesey, Plunket, Mr. Stanley, and Mr. Blake.* Its principle was to give the whole mass of the people a sound united secular education, and to afford facilities for separate religious education. All the children were taught reading and writing, and other branches of rudimentary knowledge, and on certain specified days religious instruction was given, attendance at which was optional. It was believed that it would be beneficial to teach the people to read and write, even if they were taught nothing more. It was thought, too, that by constant contact the members of the two reli-

* For some curious details on this subject, see Lord Cloncurry's Recollections.

gions might come to respect and to like each other, while retaining their differences of opinion. A very large proportion, however, of the Protestant clergy discovered that there were many passages in the Old Testament, and that there was one passage in the Ordination Service, which rendered it criminal for them to take any part in a system of education under which they were not allowed to teach ALL the pupils from the Bible. They accordingly refused to support the system and established a rival society, which flourishes to the present day. This secession, of course, greatly increased the difficulty of carrying out the proposed plan with impartiality, and innumerable complaints were made of its working by the extreme members of both parties. At last the whole body of the Roman Catholic hierarchy declared against it, and their opposition continues still. On the whole there can be little doubt that the system has been a very efficient agent in promoting the secular enlightenment of the people.

A number of superfluous bishoprics were swept away. The unceremonious manner in which the dignity of the episcopacy was on this occasion treated by Parliament is believed by many to have been the proximate cause of the Tractarian movement in England.

But, perhaps, the most important of these measures was the substitution of a land-tax for the

old system of tithes. By this substitution the burden was removed from the peasants, who were nearly all Roman Catholics, and imposed on the landlords, who were nearly all Protestants. It was said, indeed, that the tax was eventually drawn from the rents; but it may be much doubted whether there was any general augmentation of the rents when the tax was imposed; and it may be still more doubted whether its removal would be followed by any general reduction. Twenty-five per cent. was taken off the clerical income derived from tithes, in consideration of the certainty and facility of its collection under the new system. A section of the Roman Catholics still continue to adopt precisely the same language as when the tithe grievance was at its height. A section of the Protestants inveighed bitterly against the "spoliation of the Church," and indulged in many threnodies upon "a deteriorated Protestantism;" but the mass of the people have been greatly pacified by the measure, and it has been followed by a rapid diminution of crime and of ill feeling.

At the same time it would be idle to suppose that the question of Church revenues has been finally set at rest. In the present day, when the current runs so strongly against all religious endowments, it is not to be expected that the exclusive establishment of the religion of a small and wealthy minority of a nation can escape censure. The arguments against Establishments assume a

peculiar plausibility when directed against a Church which has become associated with so much ill-feeling and animosity, and which, however great and unquestionable its excellences in other respects, has certainly not contributed to attach the affections of the people to order, to Protestantism, or to England. The objections to it are especially suited to the popular mind, and it has had the misfortune to elicit the denunciations of some Protestants of great eminence. Macaulay, in 1847, said, "Of all the institutions now existing in the civilized world, the Established Church of Ireland seems to me the most absurd."

While the measures we have enumerated were in progress, the Repeal movement was rapidly advancing. In 1831 an attempt had been made to prevent it by "the Leinster Declaration," a document signed by a large number of influential Irishmen, deprecating the evils that would necessarily accompany the agitation, but without pronouncing any opinion upon the wisdom of the object. O'Connell himself, as we have already observed, seems to have, for a time, shrunk from the enterprise, and was almost forced against his will to embark upon it. The wishes of the people were evidently set upon the resurrection of the Irish Parliament, and the tone and policy of the Tories had a natural tendency to sustain the feeling. Besides this, a number of other agitators had arisen who possessed considerable popular elo-

quence, without any of the higher qualities of O'Connell, and who were exciting passions which they were wholly unable to control. The principal of these was Feargus O'Connor, who was afterwards so well known from his connection with Chartism.

We may add to the foregoing reasons, that O'Connell, notwithstanding the timidity we have recorded, was ever at heart an enthusiastic Repealer. Endowed to an extraordinary degree with that "retrospective imagination" which is so characteristic of his countrymen, the recollection of the Irish Parliament had been the earliest romance of his life. His first speech had been delivered in its defence. His ambition had been first kindled by those orators who shed a glow of such immortal beauty over its fall. Again and again, during the long struggle for emancipation, he had reverted to its history, and had predicted its revival. Again and again he had consoled himself by the hope that the checks and disappointments and rebuffs he had met with would strengthen the public opinion that was to regain it. For a time after his first great triumph the experience of the difficulties to be encountered may have made him hesitate to fulfil his programme; but it was a hesitation that was easily dispelled.

Did O'Connell believe in the possibility of obtaining Repeal by agitation? To answer this

question, as Gustave de Beaumont observes, but a little knowledge of human nature is required. We all know that the tendency of our minds is to underrate the difficulties of attaining any object of ambition in proportion to the duration and the enthusiasm of our desire. The lawyer, after a few hours' study of an untenable case, will frequently become entirely identified with it—will persuade himself that its arguments are irresistibly cogent, and look forward with the utmost confidence to its triumph. How much more easily may the politician become over-confident in a cause which has been the dream of his life, and under-estimate the obstacles in his path! It is impossible to read the published conversations of O'Connell without feeling that he was naturally of a most sanguine temperament. It is impossible to follow his career without perceiving that it was eminently calculated to foster such a temperament. He had entered into politics upon an untrdden path, with no precedent to guide him, with no encouragement to cheer him, with no experience to sustain him. The most illustrious of his fellow-countrymen had predicted his failure. The enemies of his cause had long made him the object of their ridicule. He had seen public opinion among his co-religionists so faint as scarcely to be perceptible to the rulers. He had made it so terrible that the resolution of Wellington and the genius of Peel quailed beneath it. He had seen the society

of his creation unable to secure the attendance of ten members at its meetings, and he had made it the ruler of Ireland. He had seen the Roman Catholic clergy equally submissive and powerless, and by their instrumentality he had wielded the passions of the nation. Looking back to such a triumph as that of 1829, encouraged by the sympathy and admiration of the leading nations of Europe, and idolized by the immense majority of his own, was it surprising that he should have entered with confidence and with cheerfulness upon the struggle? His first object was to convince the people that their efforts would be successful; and in convincing them he strengthened his own conviction. The occupation of his life for many years was to throw the Repeal arguments into the most fascinating and imposing light; and in doing so his own belief in his cause rose to fanaticism. It is related of him that he suggested that but one line should be graven upon his tomb—"He died a Repealer."

And was his hope so very unreasonable? Was it impossible—was it even improbable—that the Irish Parliament might have been restored? O'Connell perceived that England was trembling on the verge of that principle which she has since unequivocally asserted—that a nation's will is the one legitimate rule of its government. All rational men acknowledged that the Union was unconstitutionally imposed on Ireland, contrary

to the wish of one generation. O'Connell was prepared to show, by the protest of the vast majority of the people, that it was retained without the acquiescence of the next. He had allied his cause with the party which were rising surely and rapidly to power in England—with the democracy, whose gradual progress is effacing the most venerable landmarks of the constitution—with the Freetraders, whose approaching triumph he had hailed and exulted in from afar. He had perceived the possibility of forming a powerful party in Parliament, which would be free to co-operate with all English parties without coalescing with any, which might thus turn the balance of factions, and decide the fate of ministries. He saw, too, that while England in a time of peace might resist the expressed will of the Irish nation, its policy would be necessarily modified in time of war; and he predicted that should there be a collision with France while the nation was organised as in '43, repeal would be the immediate and the inevitable consequence. In a word, he believed that under a constitutional government the will of four-fifths of a nation, if peacefully, perseveringly, and energetically expressed, must sooner or later be triumphant. If a war had broken out during the agitation—if the life of O'Connell had been prolonged ten years longer—if any worthy successor had assumed his mantle—if a fearful famine had not broken the

spirit of the people—who can say that the agitation would not have been successful? Such a contest, however, was too great to be compressed into the closing years of a laborious life.

But then we are met with the ready answer—the Repeal rent was the object of the Repeal agitation. For years this rent was the ceaseless subject of the ridicule of the writers of the British press, and placemen of every order declaimed in choicest periods on the iniquity of receiving money for political services. We do not shrink from the subject. To suppose that a vast movement, extending over nearly the whole surface of Ireland, sending its agents to every county and to every parish, exercising its influence upon every election, collecting statistics, redressing wrongs, preparing petitions, and actively propagating its opinions, could be created and maintained without a regular tribute, is, we think, palpably absurd. The Repeal rent was necessary for the maintenance of the organization, and it was also the most imposing manifestation of its power. No equally efficacious means has ever been adopted of giving cohesion to a great political movement, of securing the sustained and intelligent co-operation of the people, of exhibiting beyond all question the extent and the intensity of the public feeling, and of proving its progressive character. To make O'Connell the recipient of the rent was the only means of making it

thoroughly popular, and of preventing those disputes and recriminations that would have been so injurious to the cause. O'Connell was the idol of the nation. He had relinquished for its service a most lucrative practice at the Bar ; he had surrendered all hopes of promotion to the Bench, to which he would otherwise have undoubtedly attained, and where he might have spent his closing years in affluence and in dignified ease. His sacrifices, his prominent position, and the fascination of his genius, rendered the tribute in the eyes of his supporters a fitting reward for his services, and a fitting testimonial of their affection. How faithfully it was expended his death sufficiently proved. Though he had been one of the most popular lawyers in Ireland when he practised at the Bar, and though he had inherited a considerable property from his uncle in 1825, he died broken in fortune as in spirits. Out of the princely revenue he had commanded, he did not even secure a competency for his children. He had received it from the people's love—he spent it in the people's cause.

To these considerations two answers are given. It is said that O'Connell lived in the most luxurious manner, keeping open house, and exercising the most unbounded hospitality, and that he also employed a large portion of the tribute in bringing his relations into Parliament. We admit the facts, but deny the implied inference. With

reference to the first charge, it might be sufficient to say that a man whose life was spent for the most part in Herculean labours—in ceaseless and depressing cares—might well be pardoned if, in the rare hours of relaxation, he employed every possible means of stimulating and invigorating a mind jaded by excess of toil. But there is a fuller answer than this. O'Connell was the leader of a great agitation. He had formed a system of government which he designed to exhibit as eclipsing the recognised government of Ireland. He was the centre of that vast movement which radiated over three provinces. For a man occupying such a position, keeping up intimate relations with so many politicians, and directing such various operations, great hospitality was absolutely necessary. No one ascribes the hospitality of the Prime Minister, or of any other political leader, to a spirit of self-indulgence—it is simply the necessity of their position; and with reference to the elevation of his relatives to Parliament, while there can be no doubt that it was gratifying to his feelings we cannot admit that it was injurious to his cause. His grand object, as a parliamentary leader, compared with which every other became insignificant, was to inspire his party with perfect unanimity. In no conceivable way could he more fully effect that object than by bringing into Parliament men who were personally attached

to himself; and we do not think that it can be shown in a single instance that by doing so he excluded a man of remarkable abilities.

But the real cause of the declamation against O'Connell is not the tribute he received, but the unflinching consistency he exhibited. Had he, like Plunket, employed language that bordered upon treason and then subsided in the dignity of the Woolsack; had he, like Sheil, pronounced Repeal to be but a "splendid chimera," and exchanged its service for the Mastership of the Mint; had he allied himself unreservedly to any party, or made himself the tool of any Ministry, or abandoned any of his distinctive political doctrines, he would have doubtless found at least a section of English politicians to eulogise him. But because he upheld the same principles with unwavering fidelity from his earliest youth till excessive labour had bowed down his strong frame and death had silenced the thunder of his eloquence; because he never coalesced with an English party, or accepted a Government office, or ranged himself among the avowed supporters of any Minister; because, in a word, he knew no masters but his country and his religion, and sacrificed all else for them; he has been ridiculed, and calumniated, and insulted, even in the grave. In the public mind there is no greater crime than consistency in an unpopular cause, and no greater folly if it be an unsuccessful one.

The career of O'Connell, during the Repeal movement, divides itself into two distinct parts: his parliamentary life and his agitation in Ireland. He readily perceived that to bring the Repeal question at once into Parliament would be extremely unwise. Parliament is, in the first instance, always almost unanimous in opposing any radical change. It is only when the public opinion has been thoroughly gained, when the evils of resistance are shown to be greater than those which can flow from concession, and when the question has assumed an overwhelming magnitude, that the parliamentary tide turns. Its change is then often both sudden and complete. O'Connell, perceiving this, determined to abstain from discussing the subject in Parliament; and it is very remarkable, when we remember how constantly he spoke from impulse, that he should have so long resisted the taunts by which his opponents sought to impel him to a division. A party, however, in Ireland, represented by Feargus O'Connor and the 'Freeman's Journal,' argued so vehemently for a parliamentary discussion, that he was at length compelled to yield. The result, as might have been easily anticipated, was a deplorable failure. Only one English member voted for Repeal, and the majority against it amounted to nearly 500. The division discouraged him greatly, and perhaps somewhat damped the ardour of the movement.

In debate he had to contend with almost overwhelming obstacles. All parties were combined against him, and all the great English speakers exerted their utmost eloquence in denouncing him. Against the torrent of their invective and argument he had but one ally, and Sheil, as we have said, though always an effective speaker, did not greatly excel as a debater. O'Connell had also the immense disadvantage of speaking on Irish questions amid the clamours and derisive exclamations of his audience, while his opponents were cheered to the echo. His skill as a debater was very great. His boundless readiness, the singular clearness of his statements and of his arguments, and the tact with which he pointed and condensed his case, placed him at once in the foremost rank. This last characteristic is the more remarkable, from its being combined with a precisely opposite talent. When he had a subject to bring forward, no one could state it more succinctly and forcibly. When his only object was to make a speech, no one could throw platitudes in a more fascinating form, or diffuse a very small amount of matter more adroitly through his rhetoric. The skill with which he could appeal to the passions and the deep music of his tones added to the charm of his speeches. His brogue, though very marked, was not of that kind which greatly offends the ear and impairs the power of eloquence. Its effect was rather (to adopt an expression of

Lever's) "to Italianize the English"—to give a richer and more mellow tone to his voice. Two capital faults he constantly exhibited—a proneness to vulgarity and to excessive violence of abuse. He never could repress the intensity of his feeling or veil it by sarcasm and irony. As a rhetorician he ranks far below both Macaulay and Sheil. As a debater Mr. Stanley was his only rival. All parties admitted that in the fierce collisions between O'Connell and Mr. Stanley it was exceedingly difficult to say on which side the advantage lay. Each exerted himself to the utmost—each, for the first time, found a worthy opponent—each brought an extreme fierceness into the contest. Mr. Stanley's temper was the more imperious—O'Connell's was the more intense.

The debates on Mr. Stanley's Coercion Bills were perhaps the most splendid examples of his parliamentary powers. Assisted only by occasional speeches by Sheil, he had to bear the brunt of all the eloquence of Macaulay, Stanley, and Peel, together with numbers of minor orators, while Lord Brougham was inveighing against him in the other House. Notwithstanding these powerful odds, it seems to have been very generally admitted that in eloquence and in force he at least held his position throughout. The effect of the measure was to prevent petitioning for Repeal. O'Connell described it as a bill directed against a single individual—himself. The inter-

ruptions he met with were sufficient to disconcert any less practised orator. On one occasion his voice was completely drowned for some time by an explosion of this inarticulate eloquence. When it had a little subsided, he exclaimed with characteristic impetuosity that he was not going to be put down "by beastly bellowings;" upon which a member rose and gravely observed that the epithet "beastly" was out of order when applied to the exclamations of members of the House. O'Connell professed his willingness to retract the obnoxious expression, but added some apologetical remark, to the effect that he had never heard of any bellowings that were not beastly. The Speaker decided that the epithet was contrary to order, but not more so than the ejaculations that had elicited it. In addition to the denunciations of the parliamentary leaders, O'Connell had the honour of being directly attacked in a King's Speech.

Besides taking a conspicuous part in every Irish debate, O'Connell interested himself greatly in several English and foreign questions. The principal of these were, parliamentary reform, the abolition of corporal punishment in the army, the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, the wrongs of Poland, and the emancipation of the negroes. His conduct on this last subject was singularly noble. It was one of the most earnest objects of his desire to kindle a feeling of sympathy for his cause in America; he

knew that if he simply avoided the question of slavery, he could succeed in his aim ; yet he never spared or qualified his denunciations. From party warfare he held very much aloof. The Tories he naturally regarded with feelings of detestation. The Whigs he defined as “Tories out of office,” and their Coercion Bills, in his opinion, more than outweighed their ancient services to Ireland. He desired to form a separate party which might turn the balance, and thus extort its own terms. Once only—during the administration of Lord Melbourne—he in some degree abandoned his neutrality, and became an active supporter of the Government. Under the conciliatory policy of this Ministry the crimes and dissensions that had been so rife in Ireland were in a great measure appeased. The smallness of the Whig majority was at this time one of the chief sources of O’Connell’s power. It was in allusion to this alliance that Mr. Stanley, in one of his attacks on the Ministers, quoted with great effect those lines from Shakespeare :—

“But shall it be that you, that set the crown
Upon the head of this forgetful man,
And, for his sake, wear the detested blot
Of murd’rous subornation—shall it be
That you a world of curses undergo,
Being the agents, or base second means,
The cords, the ladder, or the hangman rather ?
Oh ! pardon me that I descend so low
To show the line and the predicament,
Wherein you range under this subtle king.

Shall it, for shame, be spoken in these days,
Or fill up chronicles in time to come,
That men of your nobility and power
Did 'gave them both in an unjust behalf,
As both of you—God pardon you!—have done?

* * * * *

And shall it, in more shame, be further spoken,
That you are fooled, discarded, and shook off
By him for whom these shames ye underwent?" *

The policy of Sir Robert Peel, who succeeded Lord Melbourne, was widely different from that of his predecessor, and so much in accordance with the wishes of the Orangemen that it procured him the nickname of "Orange Peel." He declared that there was "no influence, no power, no authority, which the prerogative of the Crown and the existing laws gave the Government that should not be exercised for the purpose of maintaining the Union." The Chancellor Sugden dismissed from the magistracy O'Connell and some other conspicuous Repealers, and it was clearly understood that no one who held the obnoxious opinions had the slightest chance of obtaining any office from the Government or any recognition of his talents at the Bar. Some young lawyers of

* To this clever quotation we may oppose one made by O'Connell on another occasion, when the Derby interest had suffered greatly in a general election. After dilating in a strain of irony on the subject, he cited that couplet from Canning:—

"A down thy dale, romantic Ashburn, glides
The Derby Dilly with just six insides."

promise selected this time for joining the movement, and the people, whose confidence in their leader was boundless, accepted the defiance with joyful alacrity. Ireland was indeed now fully prepared for the contest. There was no hesitation, no eclecticism manifest in any party. The lines of demarcation were clearly drawn. Those vacillating and indiscriminate characters who were compared by O'Connell to the monsters in the 'Arabian Nights' with green backs and orange tails had nearly all disappeared. The organisation of the Repealers had been elaborated almost to perfection, and had attained its full dimensions. The Repeal Society consisted of three classes—the volunteers who subscribed or collected 10*l.* a-year, the members who subscribed 1*l.*, the associates who subscribed 1*s.* The rents were collected by the instrumentality of the clergy. The unity of the organization was maintained by Repeal wardens, under the direction of O'Connell, who presided over assigned districts. The exertions of the society were directed to the extension of Repeal influence at the elections, to the preparation of petitions, and to the assemblage of monster meetings.

O'Connell, after a time, devoted himself almost exclusively to the development of the society in Ireland, and in 1843, the year of the monster meetings, he abstained altogether from parliamentary duties. During this year he occupied,

we think, the pinnacle of his glory. There are three great instances on record of politicians, discouraged by overwhelming majorities, seceding from Parliament. Grattan gave up his seat and became utterly powerless in the country. Fox retired from the debate, though retaining his seat, and he too became for a time little more than a cypher. O'Connell followed the example of Fox, but he drew with him the attention of Europe. In no previous portion of his career, not even when he had gained emancipation from the humbled ministry of Wellington, did he attract greater attention or admiration. Whoever turns over the magazines or newspapers of the period will easily perceive how grandly his figure dominated over those of the English ministers, how completely he had dispelled the indifference that had so long prevailed on Irish questions, how clearly his agitation stands forth as the great fact of the time.

It would be difficult, indeed, to conceive a more imposing demonstration of public opinion than was furnished by those vast assemblies which were held in every Catholic county, and attended by almost every adult male. They usually took place upon Sunday morning, in the open air, upon some hill-side. At daybreak the mighty throng might be seen, broken into detached groups and kneeling on the greensward around their priests, while the incense rose from a hundred rude altars,

and the solemn music of the Mass floated upon the gale, and seemed to impart a consecration to the cause. O'Connell stood upon a platform, surrounded by the ecclesiastical dignitaries and by the more distinguished of his followers. Before him that immense assembly was ranged without disorder, or tumult, or difficulty; organised with the most perfect skill, and inspired with the most unanimous enthusiasm. There is, perhaps, no more impressive spectacle than such an assembly, pervaded by such a spirit, and moving under the control of a single mind. The silence that prevailed through its whole extent during some portions of his address; the concordant cheer bursting from tens of thousands of voices; the rapid transitions of feeling as the great magician struck alternately each chord of passion, and as the power of sympathy, acting and reacting by the well-known law, intensified the prevailing feeling, were sufficient to carry away the most callous, and to influence the most prejudiced; the critic forgot his art; the opponent blended the language of admiration with that of censure;* the intellectualist

* The following is Bulwer's description of the scene:—

“Once to my sight the giant thus was given,
Walled by wide air and roofed by boundless heaven :
Beneath his feet the human ocean lay,
And wave on wave flowed into space away.
Methought no clarion could have sent its sound
E'en to the centre of the hosts around;
And, as I thought, rose the sonorous swell,
As from some church-tower swings the silvery bell ;

experienced emotions that the most stately eloquence of the senate had failed to produce.

The greatest of all these meetings, perhaps the grandest display of the kind that has ever taken place, was held around the Hill of Tarah. According to very moderate computations, nearly a quarter of a million were assembled there to attest their sympathy with the movement. The spot was well chosen for the purpose. Tarah of the Kings, the seat of the ancient royalty of Ireland, has ever been regarded by the Irish people with something of a superstitious awe. The vague legends that cluster around it, the poetry that has consecrated its past, and the massive relics of its ancient greatness that have been from time to time discovered, have invested it with an ineffable and a most fascinating grandeur. It was on this spot that O'Connell, standing by the stone where the kings of Ireland were once crowned,

Aloft and clear from airy tide to tide
It glided easy, as a bird may glide.
To the last verge of that vast audience sent,
It played with each wild passion as it wert.
Now stirred the uproar—now the murmurs stilled,
And sobs or laughter answered as it willed.
Then did I know what spells of infinite choice
To rouse or lull has the sweet human voice.
Then did I learn to seize the sudden clue
To the grand troublous life antique—to view
Under the rock-stand of Demosthenes
Unstable Athens heave her noisy seas."

—*St. Stephens.*

sketched the coming glories of his country. Beneath him, like a mighty sea, extended the throng of listeners. They were so numerous that thousands were unable to catch the faintest echo of the voice they loved so well ; yet all remained passive, tranquil, and decorous. In no instance did these meetings degenerate into mobs. They were assembled, and they were dispersed, without disorder or tumult ; they were disgraced by no drunkenness, by no crime, by no excess. When the Government, in the State trials, applied the most searching scrutiny, they could discover nothing worse than that on one occasion the retiring crowd trampled down the stall of an old woman who sold gingerbread.

This absence of disorder was partly owing to the influence of O'Connell, and partly to that of Father Mathew. The extraordinary career of that wonderful man was at this time at its height, and Teetotalism was nearly as popular as Repeal. The two movements mutually assisted one another, and advanced together. The splendid success of Father Mathew was probably owing in a great measure to the fact that O'Connell had strung the minds of the people to a pitch of almost heroic enthusiasm ; and, on the other hand, O'Connell declared that he would never have ventured to hold the monster meetings were it not that he had the Teetotallers "for his policemen." There was scarcely a Catholic county where these meetings were not held, and

those who attended them have been reckoned by millions.

In the same year a very remarkable evidence was furnished of the extent to which the *Repeal* opinions were held by the intellect of the country in the creation of the 'Nation' newspaper. I know few more melancholy spectacles—no more mournful illustration of the declension of the national party in Ireland than is furnished by the contrast between the present of that paper and its past. What it is now we need not say. What it was when Gavan Duffy edited it—when Davis, Macarthy, and all their brilliant companions contributed to it, and when its columns maintained with unqualified zeal the cause of liberty and nationality in every land, Irishmen can never forget. Seldom has there been a more striking evidence of the effect of a great enthusiasm in evoking the latent genius of a nation ; seldom has any journal of the kind exhibited a more splendid combination of eloquence, of poetry, and of reasoning.

And over all this vast movement O'Connell at this time reigned supreme. There was no rival to his supremacy—there was no restriction to his authority. He played with the fierce enthusiasm he had aroused with the negligent ease of a master ; he governed the complicated organization he had created with a sagacity that never failed. He had made himself the focus of the attention of other lands, and the centre around which the

rising intellect of his own revolved. He had transformed the whole social system of Ireland ; almost reversed the relative positions of Protestants and Roman Catholics ; remodelled by his influence the representative, the ecclesiastical, the educational institutions, and created a public opinion that surpassed the wildest dreams of his predecessors. Can we wonder at the proud exultation with which he exclaimed, “ Grattan sat by the cradle of his country, and followed her hearse : it was left for me to sound the resurrection trumpet, and to show that she was not dead, but sleeping ! ”

Among the many popular methods of depreciating the intellect of O’Connell, one of the principal has been to represent him simply as a member of a very numerous and a very much despised class, who are known by the name of demagogues. Now, if by a demagogue is understood a man who is merely an adept in mobocracy, whose life is spent in pandering to the passions of the populace, in following and in interpreting their follies, and in advocating the extreme opinions they delight in—a man who assails everything and creates nothing, who is popular because he takes his opinions from the people, and influential because he appeals recklessly to their most dangerous passions—it is quite true that such a character is a contemptible one, but equally true that it does not apply to

O'Connell. The truth is, that the position of O'Connell, so far from being a common one, is absolutely unique in history. There have been many greater men, but there is no one with whom he compares disadvantageously, for he stands alone in his sphere. We may search in vain through the records of the past for any man who, without the effusion of a drop of blood, or the advantages of office or of rank, succeeded in governing a people so absolutely and so long, and in creating so entirely the elements of his power. A king without rebellion, with his tribute, his government, and his deputies, he at once evaded the meshes of the law, and restrained the passions of the people. He possessed to the highest degree the eloquence of a demagogue, but he possessed also the sagacity of a statesman and the independence of a patriot. He yielded frequently to the wishes of the people and to the passions of the age, but on points which he deemed important he never shrunk from resisting them. He believed the poor-laws to be erroneous in their principle and unsatisfactory in their action, and he opposed them, though the whole mass of the people were in their favour, and though Dr. Doyle, the ablest and most popular of the Roman Catholic prelates, had come forward to advocate them. He rejected without hesitation the proffered alliance of the Chartist, though Englishmen of almost every other class were inveighing against him. He

regarded strikes as one of the curses of the country, and in 1838, when they were very prevalent in Ireland, and were supported by numbers of his followers, he was among the most prominent of those who denounced them. On this occasion he seriously imperilled his influence. He was scarcely able to obtain a hearing at a meeting he attended. He was hooted through the streets of Dublin, but he never shrank from warning the people against those combinations.

But the noblest instance of his moderation is furnished by his constant denunciations of rebellion. An orator who sought only for popularity in addressing so bellicose a people as the Irish, would have dwelt constantly on the verge of treason, and have continually dilated upon the glories of the battle-field. O'Connell, on the other hand, uniformly warned the people against appealing to arms. He recurred to the subject again and again ; he exhausted all his eloquence in contrasting the advantages of constitutional agitation with the horrors of war ; he exhibited at all times, both in public and in his private conversations, an almost Quaker detestation of force. Perhaps no higher tribute has ever been paid him than that of Mr. Mitchell, who declared that, next to the British Government, he regarded O'Connell as the greatest enemy of Ireland ; for it was altogether owing to his eloquence and to his principles that the Irish people could not be induced

to follow the revolutionary movement of 1848. That it was not from want of courage, or from the absence of discontent, all who know the people must be assured. He proclaimed himself the first apostle of that sect whose first doctrine was, that no political change was worth shedding a drop of blood, and that all might be attained by moral force ; and he confidently looked forward to the time when the force of public opinion would prove invariably triumphant in political struggles. As one of the poets of the movement wrote :—

“ When the Lord created the earth and the sea,
The stars, and the glorious sun,
The Godhead *spoke*, and the universe woke,
And the mighty work was done !
Let a word be flung from the orator’s tongue,
Or a drop from the fearless pen, .
And the chains accurst asunder burst
That fettered the minds of men.

Oh ! these are the arms with which we fight,
The swords in which we trust,
Which no tyrant hand shall dare to brand,
Which time cannot stain or rust.
When these we bore we triumphed before,
With these we’ll triumph again,
And the world shall say no power can stay
The voice or the fearless pen.”*

In almost every country the lower orders are inclined to war. It is the eternal glory of the democracies of England and Ireland that they are exceptions to the rule. In England this is owing

* Macarthy.

to their plodding and practical character, and also, we think, to the tone of the Manchester politicians, whose services in this respect are scarcely appreciated as they deserve. In Ireland, where the people are far more inflammatory than in England, where they are utterly unpractical and thoroughly discontented, it is almost entirely due to the exertions of O'Connell. This alone would be sufficient to place his name high among the benefactors of Ireland ; for history shows that an appeal to force has always been the prelude to the defeat of the national cause. Under Elizabeth it prefaced the complete subjugation of Ireland, under Charles the successes of Cromwell, in 1798 the Union, and in 1848 the dissolution of the Repeal movement.

Nor can we look upon O'Connell as the mere tool of the clergy. It is true that he first brought them into the political arena, and governed by their means, but he was invariably the director of their policy. He refused emphatically to submit to be dictated to by his spiritual advisers. "As much theology as you please from Rome," he said, "but no politics." "We are Roman Catholics, but not servants of Rome." He alone of all Roman Catholics succeeded in making himself through his whole life the representative of his Church, and at the same time one of the most advanced and consistent members of the Liberal party. It is this aspect of his career which seems to have most

struck continental writers, and to have made him "a representative man" in his Church.

The struggle against the Church of Rome in the present day is not strictly theological. The sermons of Protestant divines and the dissemination of Protestant books seem to have lost much of their old effect, and the real enemy of the Church is not the clergyman but the politician. There is a point in which the spheres of politics and of religion intersect. The doctrine of the Divine right of kings—that rebellion (except when the Pope has expressly authorized it) is, under all circumstances, a sin, must be admitted by candid men to be essentially and indissolubly connected with the Roman Church. The French Revolution, springing as it did in a Roman Catholic country, struck a fatal blow against that Church when it established the opposite system. Since then the government of a great part of Catholic Europe rests on principles which the Church of Rome cannot endorse, and the sympathies of the people are in habitual opposition to those of the priests. The great Liberal party that ramifies over nearly the whole of Europe, and advances side by side with education and with social progress, is in open or disguised antagonism to the Church; and as its triumph becomes every year more apparent and its popularity more undoubted, the priestly power is waning rapidly in lands where the doctrines of Protestantism are unknown. It

was the work of O'Connell to make the Liberal party in Ireland at least synonymous with the Catholic party. By drawing clearly the distinction between rebellion which the Church condemns, and agitation which it does not condemn; by advocating in Parliament the cause of every oppressed nationality; by claiming religious equality for the Dissenters as well as for his co-religionists; by allying himself with the most advanced democrats; and, above all, by making his cause essentially national; he succeeded in becoming at once the greatest Catholic and one of the greatest Liberals of his age. Three or four of the most gifted intellects of France were engaged at the same time, though with very indifferent success, in advocating this alliance, and they regarded O'Connell as their great model and representative. On this ground three of the most eloquent men on the Continent have made him the subject of the most splendid eulogy,—Montalembert, Ventura, and Lacordaire. The attempt was almost a hopeless one. The priestly party always gravitates, sooner or later, to despotism, and the humiliating and absurdly inconsistent attitude of Ireland with reference to the Italian question, shows sufficiently how transient was the effect of the exhortations of O'Connell; but if unable to ally his cause permanently with Liberalism abroad, he at least succeeded in identifying it with nationality at home. He contrived to

place the Protestant clergy in direct opposition to the sympathies of the people, to neutralise all the good effect of the Liberalism of Grattan and of Curran, and thus to raise a formidable rampart around his Church. To those who consider how very little doctrines depend for their acceptance on the unbiassed judgment of the intellect, and how very much upon the sympathies and the esteem inspired by their teachers, it will appear sufficiently evident that the Church of England in Ireland, like the Church of Rome in Italy, can never plant its roots in the affections of the people. Each Church opposes the dearest wishes of the people. The clergy of each Church are accused (whether justly or unjustly we do not inquire) of having sacrificed the dignity and the independence of their country to the maintenance of their own emoluments. Montalembert said with truth that O'Connell did more for his Church than any Catholic sovereign who was his contemporary.

With his great talents were mingled great defects. O'Connell's was pre-eminently a peasant character. He continually spoke upon impulse, and was betrayed into the grossest vulgarisms, into a strain of vituperation that a man of a refined mind could under no conceivable provocation have given way to, and also into the most curiously inappropriate exhibitions of his better feelings. It seems almost incredible that a

man of his intellect and general tact, surrounded by enemies and by satirists, should have deliberately published a letter representing himself as having cried bitterly in bed after endeavouring in vain to ward off a coercion bill. Another instance of almost equally bad taste was his dedication to the Queen of his memoir of the atrocities of past English Governments in Ireland—a dedication which for bombast and puerility would be a disgrace to the pen of the editor of a country newspaper. When, however, he was writing to the people on a definite subject, his style was forcible, perspicuous, and fluent.

One charge of a deeper dye was frequently brought against him. It was said that he exhibited a systematic disregard for truth. It is extremely difficult to form any adequate judgment on such a question in the case of a man so long and fiercely assailed as O'Connell, but we are inclined to think that the truth was simply that he had a natural propensity to exaggeration, and, like all popular orators, a great passion for producing those effects which the statement of a startling fact in an unqualified form so often causes. His conversation was full of witty anecdotes, which it is impossible to read without feeling that they are too pointed to be quite true—that some qualification must have been withheld, or some imaginary circumstance artistically inserted to give them such epigrammatic brilliancy. Every man who is in-

tensely earnest in the pursuit of an object which is to be attained by popular eloquence is under great temptations of this kind. The Irish temperament of O'Connell had a natural bias to exaggeration, and an education at St. Omer's and practice as a counsel would certainly not correct it. It is difficult, indeed, to over-estimate the temptation under which an orator labours when in the full torrent of his rapid eloquence an epigram flashes upon his mind, which he knows would produce a powerful effect, which he knows to be substantially true, but which derives its trenchant keenness from being unaccompanied by those qualifying or explanatory circumstances that ought properly to be stated. It is very difficult, too, for a man who has been accustomed for years to deliver professionally one-sided speeches, to feign the most impassioned earnestness in behalf of a client whom he knows to be in the wrong, and to urge every plausible argument in his behalf even when he knows that argument to be sophistical—to avoid contracting habits that will cling to him through all his public life. We think that the deviations of O'Connell from strict truth may be ascribed to the habits of education and to the impetuous character of his temper much more than to any deeper cause.

We have dwelt long upon the intellectual and moral calibre of O'Connell, for there is, we think, scarcely anyone who is more underrated in Eng-

land, and there is scarcely anyone concerning whom English and continental writers more widely differ. It is impossible for those who do not realize the position which he occupied with reference to the progressive party in his Church, to understand the full grandeur of his position ; and the depreciatory tone adopted by his many enemies has naturally made a deep impression on the public mind. Besides this there is a constant tendency, especially among intellectual people, to undervalue those whose genius is employed chiefly in action, especially when the lower orders are the subjects of that action. Nothing is more common than to hear passages of clap-trap declamation or of coarse humour cited as infallible proofs that the speaker had no perception of the true sublime, without considering that some audiences might be more affected by such passages than by all the eloquence of Demosthenes.

If we were asked to point out a personage in history who, in intellectual and moral temperament bore a striking resemblance to O'Connell, we should select one who differed from him in principles perhaps as widely as any that could be named—we mean Martin Luther. There is something in the very appearance of each of these men indicating the same nature—a nature of indomitable strength, genial rather than refined, massive and precious, but somewhat coarsegrained. In each character and intellect so happily harmonised,

that it were hard to say how much their success was due to force of will, and how much to force of mind. In each was the same instinctive tact in governing great masses of men, the same calculated audacity, the same intuitive perception of opportunities, the same art in inspiring and in retaining confidence. Each displayed an eloquence of the most popular character, nervous, pointed, but incorrect; thrilling and fascinating, by the glow of feeling that pervaded it; repelling and irritating, by the coarseness, the vituperation, the vulgarity into which it degenerated. Each was associated with men of far purer intellectuality and of a far more heroic enthusiasm, yet each, if measured by his achievements, towers above all his associates. Neither can be judged fairly by a microscopic and a detailed criticism. It is easy to detect acts that cannot be justified, language that can scarcely be palliated, inconsistencies that it is difficult to explain. Luther, in his interpretations of the marriage-law; O'Connell, in the assertions he sometimes hazarded in public, exhibit, we fear, undoubted examples of men in whose eyes the end, in a measure, justified the means. But, though their opponents will never be at a loss for subject-matter for their attacks; though their admirers will always find much that they must deeply deplore, and though the sentimentalists will turn with disgust from men in whose temperaments the grosser elements so largely mingled,

yet the stamp of true genius is upon both, and the aureol that marks those who have laboured faithfully for mankind, will ever circle their memories. The colossal magnitude and majestic unity of their lives becomes only visible when distance has enabled the eye to discover its full proportions, and when experience has shown how miserable are the efforts of their successors to wield their sceptres. Nay, in the very inequalities of their tempers there is much to attract sympathy. Luther, hurling his unmeasured invective against some royal opponent, and then pouring out a strain of the gentlest tenderness over his child; O'Connell, listening with calm complacency to the crowd of orators who "were advertising" him by their denunciations, yet galled to the quick by the sarcasm of an old friend, present a resemblance as pleasing as it is striking. Both were men of powerful intellects and of warm hearts, and both, amid all their faults, laboured with a firm faith to realize objects which they believed to be good.*

The Government was extremely alarmed at the

* We know that it will seem strange to some to represent O'Connell as a man acting under the influence of a fixed principle. We can give a high authority for our view. "Oh! for a great man," exclaimed Coleridge, "but one really great man, who could feel the weight and the power of a principle, and unflinchingly put it into act! See how triumphant in debate and action O'Connell is. Why? Because he asserts a broad principle, and acts up to, rests all his body on it, and has faith in it."—*Table Talk*.

success of the monster meetings, and they at length determined by a bold measure to crush the agitation. The method they employed was characteristic. A meeting had been advertised for Sunday, the 3rd October, 1843, to be held at Clontarf. It would have been probably one of the very greatest of the series, for Clontarf is in the immediate vicinity of Dublin. The meeting had been announced about a fortnight before. The Government took no notice of it till the afternoon of the 2nd, when the roads were thronged with those who had come from a distance to attend it, and a proclamation was then issued forbidding it. It is said that the cannon of "the Pigeon-house" were actually turned upon Clontarf. Under these circumstances a breach of the peace seemed almost a certainty ; and there can be little doubt that it would have taken place but for the extreme promptitude of O'Connell, who despatched his messengers in all directions to apprise the people, and who succeeded in persuading them peaceably to disperse. It has always been believed by many that the delay in issuing the proclamation was intended to provoke a collision in order that the blood thus shed might give a crushing effect to the prosecution that was meditated, and thus disorganize the people and annihilate the movement.

The Government prosecution followed close on the proclamation. It was a charge of conspiracy, or, in other words, of the employment of seditious

language against O'Connell, his son, and five of his principal followers. The trial was extremely protracted; but its monotony was relieved by much brilliant oratory, by a great deal of very curious cross-examination, and by an amusing episode occasioned by the Attorney-General, who sent a challenge to one of the opposing counsel, which that gentleman submitted to the bench. The two most eloquent speeches delivered were beyond all question those of Sheil and Mr. Whiteside. A great number of charges have been brought against this trial which have elicited much controversy. We content ourselves with stating two facts that are admitted. The panel of the jury was altered by a mistake, and that mistake was unfavourable to the Roman Catholics; and there was not a single Roman Catholic on the jury which tried the greatest Roman Catholic of his age in the metropolis of an essentially Roman Catholic country. The issue of the trial was, that O'Connell was condemned to two years' imprisonment, together with a fine—a sentence against which he appealed to the Lords.

Some months elapsed before the appeal could be heard, and during the earlier part of that time O'Connell was in great, though, as it proved, needless, alarm, lest the people should have broken into open rebellion. He dispatched from prison the most emphatic addresses exhorting them to tranquillity, and he soon found that they

were quite willing to respond to his appeal. Their reception of the Government prosecution was very striking. They remained perfectly tranquil; but the rent, which in the fourteen weeks before the trial had been 6679*l.*, rose in the fourteen weeks that followed it to 25,712*l.* In the first week it was nearly 2600*l.*

At the beginning of the trial Mr. Smith O'Brien gave for the first time his formal adhesion to the society, and, during the imprisonment of O'Connell, the leadership of the party devolved upon him. Though deficient in oratorical abilities he obtained very great weight with the people from the charm that ever hangs around a chivalrous and polished gentleman, and from the transparent purity of a patriotism on which suspicion has never rested. Perhaps no living politician has passed through so painful, so difficult, and so varied a career so perfectly unstained. Those who take the lowest estimate of his sagacity, and who judge most harshly of his mistakes, have admitted that his motives have ever been as unquestionable as his courage, and that he has never uttered a word that has not been a faithful representative of his feelings. It has been the ceaseless labour of his life to inculcate the importance of self-reliance, to disassociate the national cause from the claptrap and the bombast that have so frequently disfigured it, and to teach the people that liberal politics are only truly adopted when they are applied with-

out respect of persons and without fear of consequences. It was thus that he laboured during the lifetime of O'Connell to check the place-hunting and the boasting that disgraced the Repeal cause. It was thus that we have seen him calmly and fearlessly risking all the popularity which years of suffering have gained him by opposing those who sought to identify Irish liberalism with Italian despotism, and to draw down upon their country the horrors of a French invasion. A consistency thus undisturbed by popularity and by adversity shines with a peculiar splendour in an age of expediency like our own, and it cannot fail to exercise a salutary influence in a country which has far more need of great characters than of great intellects.

The appeal to the House of Lords was heard in September, 1844. On occasions of this kind, when the House sits to review the decisions of the Law Courts, it has always been customary to leave the matter entirely in the hands of the Law Lords; and the permanent maintenance of the judicial authority of the House obviously depends upon the observance of this custom. O'Connell, however, had always been a bitter enemy of the House of Lords. He had inveighed against it in the grossest terms—he had given many of the members cause for the deepest personal animosity. When the appeal was to be heard a number of the Lay Lords came to the House to vote against him.

The five Law Lords, who were present, first delivered their opinions—two of them confirming the sentence of the Irish court—three of them condemning it. Lord Denman, in the course of his judgment, stigmatised the whole proceeding in the strongest language. When the Law Lords had delivered their judgment, Lord Wharncliffe rose and appealed to the other members of the House not to permit their personal or political feelings to influence the judicial sentence. The appeal struck the right chord. That high and honourable feeling that ever characterises assemblies of English gentlemen reasserted its sway. Every Lay Lord left the House, and their bitterest living enemy was freed by their forbearance.

The news of the reversal of the sentence was received in Ireland with a burst of the most enthusiastic acclamations—bonfires blazed over the country—O'Connell passed through the streets of Dublin in a triumphal procession. A perfect delirium of excitement prevailed among his followers; yet, notwithstanding these ebullitions, the spell of his power was in a great measure broken. It was said that the months of imprisonment he had undergone had shattered his health and impaired his energies. For the first time for many years, serious dissensions arose among his followers. The Young Ireland party exercised considerable influence, and appeared to exercise far more from the great talent it displayed.

The 'Nation' newspaper espoused its cause. It possessed also one very brilliant orator, Thomas Francis Meagher, a young man whose eloquence was beyond comparison superior to that of any other rising speaker in the country, and who, had he been placed in circumstances favourable to the development of his talent, would perhaps have at length taken his place among the greatest orators of Ireland. The Young Irelanders were chiefly Protestants—very young, and very enthusiastic men. They differed in the first place from O'Connell on the question, whether Repealers should accept offices or promotion from the Government. They argued that those who had done so had invariably abandoned the cause—that a place-hunting spirit had crept into the society—that the sordid and corrupt element it produced was actually very great, and the discredit and suspicion it attracted much greater. On the other hand, O'Connell maintained that some concessions were necessary to the maintenance of the movement in its full extent—that the possession of place was the possession of power, and that it would be peculiarly inconsistent in Repealers to refuse it, because one of their great grievances had always been, that the Government uniformly confined its bounties to their opponents. But the great characteristic of the Young Ireland party was its advocacy of rebellion. It was far more independent of the priests than O'Connell, and was little swayed by

theological censures, and its sympathies were more with 1798 than with 1782. It was thus (to take but one instance from many) that Meagher declared in one of his speeches, “There are but two plans for our consideration—the one within the law, the other without the law. Let us take the latter. I will then ask you, Is an insurrection practicable? Prove to me that it is, and I for one will vote for it this very night. You know well, my friends, that I am not one of those tame moralists who say that liberty is not worth a drop of blood. Men who subscribe to such a maxim are fit for out-of-door relief, and for nothing better. Against this miserable maxim the noblest virtue that has saved and sanctified humanity appears in judgment. From the blue waters of the bay of Salamis—from the valley over which the sun stood still and lit the Israelites to victory—from the cathedral in which the sword of Poland has been sheathed in the shroud of Kosciusko—from the convent of St. Isidore, where the fiery hand that rent the ensign of St. George upon the plains of Ulster, has crumbled into dust—from the sands of the desert, where the wild genius of the Algerine so long has scared the eagle of the Pyrenees—from the ducal palace in this kingdom, where the memory of the gallant Geraldine enhances more than royal favour the nobility of his race—from the solitary grave within this mute city which a dying request has left without an epitaph—oh! from every spot where

heroism has had a sacrifice or a triumph, a voice breaks in upon the cringing crowd that cherishes this maxim, crying out, *Away with it!—away with it!*"

It will be remembered that the maxim thus denounced was one which O'Connell lost no opportunity of extolling.

The influence of the Young Irelanders, we repeat, was more apparent than real, for when the appeal to arms was actually made, it proved absolutely impotent against the principles with which O'Connell had leavened the people. This dissension undoubtedly much impaired the action of the movement, and an unhappy attempt that had been made, in 1844, to produce a compromise with the English Government, by substituting a scheme called Federation, for the total separation of Legislatures, had further agitated the public mind.

These disputes preyed greatly on O'Connell's mind, and the period that followed his release presents a confused and chaotic picture, very unlike that of former years. His health began to give way. Ceaseless labour and excessive care had broken a constitution that was naturally of Herculean strength. His voice, which had once pealed with such thrilling power over assembled thousands, sunk into an almost inaudible whisper. His hopes, which had once been so buoyant that they rose above all obstacles, began now to fail. Famine came with fearful rapidity upon the land. Star-

vation loomed darkly before the people, and O'Connell saw the evil and could not avert it. The chill of death was upon him—the certainty of failure wrung his soul with an agony the more bitter because of the sanguine hope that had preceded it. An unutterable, unmitigated gloom sunk upon his mind, and withered and destroyed his energies. Weak and prostrate in health and hope, he attended for the last time that Legislature which he had so triumphantly entered. For the last time he unrolled the catalogue of his country's wrongs, and suggested his remedies for the impending calamity, but his voice was so faint that but few could catch his words. The fearful change impressed all who saw him. Old rancour and party spirit were forgotten at the spectacle of so great a sorrow. He was listened to with an almost reverential silence, and followed by many evidences of pity and of respect. Statesmen of all parties testified their sympathy by their inquiries. The Queen, with a graceful kindness that should never be forgotten, sent to ask after the dying agitator. Another visit he received in those last dark days which he must have valued still more; three of the Oxford converts to Rome came to assure him that it was his career that had first directed their attention to the theology of his Church.

Religion was indeed now the only solace of his mind. In his youth he had been dissipated and

immoral ; but a change had passed over him, it is said, about the time of his duel with D'Esterre, and in his latter years he had been deeply and increasingly devout. His physicians having ordered him abroad, he resolved to draw his last breath near the tombs of the Apostles in that great city which is the metropolis of his Church. The deep melancholy which the consciousness of the famine impending over his country produced attended him on that dreary journey. "He seemed," said one who visited him in France, to be "a continued prey to sad reflections. His face had grown thin, and his look proclaimed an inexpressible sadness : the head hung upon the breast, and the entire person of the invalid, formerly so imposing, was greatly weighed down." His strength failed him when he arrived at Genoa, and in that city he expired on the 15th of May, 1847.

He bequeathed his body to Ireland and his heart to the Eternal City. The former rests in the cemetery of Glasnevin, in the vicinity of Dublin ; the latter near the tomb of Lascaris, in the church of St. Agatha, at Rome.

There is something almost awful in so dark a close of so brilliant a career. The more we dwell upon the subject the more we are convinced of the splendour and originality of the genius and of the sterling character of the patriotism of O'Connell, in spite of the calumnies that surround his memory and the many and grievous faults that ob-

scured his life. But when to the great services he rendered to his country we oppose the sectarian and class warfare that resulted from his policy, the fearful elements of discord he evoked, and which he alone could in some degree control, we cannot but doubt whether his life was a blessing or a curse to Ireland.

CLERICAL INFLUENCES.

ONE of the principal objects of a good Government should be to attach the affections of the people to itself. That lively interest in public affairs, that healthy action of public opinion which we call the national sentiment, is the true essence of all national prosperity. Geographical position, material wealth, military resources, and intellectual pre-eminence, are all of secondary importance. Wherever this national life exists in robust energy, prosperity may be fairly expected. Wherever it is wanting calamity will inevitably ensue. No truth is more clearly established in history than that the political decline of a nation is never an isolated fact. When public opinion is most vigorous, and the political condition of a country most satisfactory, the moral and intellectual development of the people will be highest. When public opinion grows faint, when patriotism dies, and factious or personal motives sway the state, a corresponding decadence will be exhibited in every branch. Departments of intellect that appear entirely unconnected with politics begin to languish: classes that seem far removed from Court

influences visibly deteriorate. The analogy between the individual and the nation holds good in its details. The disease that has infected the head pervades and emasculates the members.

In one European nation a strong national life seems to exist independently of the Government. This rare privilege France owes partly to the division of the soil among the entire people, and, we think, still more to her military system. Her army is so large that it includes a representative of almost every family, so open that its highest positions may be attained by any Frenchman, so popular that it is the constant centre of the attentions of the nation. It thus discharges one of the principal functions of a government. It is the visible type and representative of the people, the embodiment of their feelings, and the chief object of their affections.

In other countries national life depends chiefly upon the Government; and it is one of the principal advantages of free Governments that they, beyond all others, foster the public opinion which is the essence of that life. The neglect of this portion of the functions of a Government forms, I think, the great error of Carlyle and of his school. A Government is not merely an agent appointed to discharge certain business (in the ordinary sense of the word) in the most economical and efficient manner. It is also a great system of political education, and a great representative of

popular feelings. It is perhaps not too much to say, that its adaptation to the character and the wishes of the people is a more important subject of consideration than its intrinsic merits.

It is especially needful to dwell upon the importance of the national sentiment in the present day, for, in addition to those we have noticed, there are many who virtually deny it by making wealth the one test of national prosperity. This school may be said to rise chiefly from a perversion of political economy. Political economy is simply the science of wealth. It teaches the laws that regulate it, and the relation it bears to other elements of national prosperity. But, while retaining its limited scope, it has unfortunately been regarded by many inaccurate thinkers as the science of politics; and thus, by an easy transition, wealth is made the acme of political greatness. Nor was this confusion as unnatural as might be supposed; for political economy, in pursuing its appropriate object, touches incidentally upon nearly all political subjects. The system of credit is intimately connected with questions about the comparative merits of despotic and constitutional Governments; the luxurious tastes produced by wealth have an important influence upon the increase of population; the moral character of the people and their material prosperity act and react upon each other. But while political economy regards these things, it regards them merely

in their relation to the main object of the science. It represents them all as subordinate to the great aim it proposes to itself—the development and increase of wealth.

This view, though perfectly just, if adopted by the political economist when considering merely his own science, is eminently false if adopted by the statesman when surveying the whole field of politics. The first condition of true national prosperity is the harmony of the Government with the wishes and the character of the people. When this harmony is replaced by discontent or indifference, material and other prosperity invariably prove illusive. Wealth becomes but a dangerous plethora; the extension of territory only multiplies the elements of discord and of dissolution; military prowess serves merely to invest a dying system with a transient and an unsubstantial beauty.

“Government,” to adopt a fine saying of Kosuth, “is an organism, and not a mechanism.” It should grow out of the character and the traditions of the people. It should present a continuous, though ever-developing, existence, connecting the present of the nation with its past. The statesman should be merely the representative of his age, accomplishing those changes which time and public opinion had prepared. The mechanical system, which regards only the intrinsic excellence of a political arrangement, irrespec-

tively of the antecedents and the public opinion of the people, proves the invariable source of national calamity. Sometimes it produces vast and heterogeneous empires, disunited in feeling in proportion as they are centralized in government; exhibiting a legislative system almost perfect in compactness, symmetry, and harmony, and a people smouldering in continual half-suppressed rebellion. Sometimes, as in Ireland, it exhibits the strange spectacle of a free Government almost neutralized in its action by the discontent of the people, and failing in the most glaring manner to discharge its functions as the organ of their feelings and of their opinions.

There is, perhaps, no Government in the world that succeeds so admirably in eliciting, sustaining, and directing public opinion, as that of England. It does not, it is true, escape much adverse criticism among the people. A system so complex, and, in some respects, so anomalous, presents numerous points of attack, and the transparent element of publicity that invests all political matters in England, renders its defects peculiarly apparent. Its very perfections betray its faults, for, as Bacon says, "the best Governments are always subject to be like the fairest crystals, where every icicle and grain is seen, which in a fouler stone is never perceived." But in one respect its excellence is indisputable. No intelligent foreigner, we believe, could land upon the English

coast without being struck with the intensity of the political life pervading every class of the community. It permeates every pore; it thrills and vibrates along every fibre of the political body; it diffuses its action through the remotest village; it differs equally from the dull torpor of most continental nations in time of calm, and from their feverish and spasmodic excitement in time of commotion. Everywhere is exhibited a steady, habitual interest and confidence in the proceedings of Government. The decision of Parliament, if not instantly accepted, is never without its influence on the public mind. The ill-feeling, the suspicions, the apprehensions, the peccant humours that agitate the people, find there their vent, their resolution, and their end.

Little or nothing of this kind is to be found in Ireland. Severed from their ancient traditions, and ruled by a Legislature imposed on them contrary to their will; differing essentially in character and in temperament from the nation with whom they are thus associated; humiliated by the circumstances of their defeat and by the ceaseless ridicule poured on them through every organ of the press, and through every channel of literature, the Irish people seem to have lost all interest in English politics. Parliament can make their laws, but it cannot control or influence their feelings. It can revolutionize the whole system of government, but it cannot allay one discontent, or

quell one passion. Public opinion is diseased—diseased to the very core. Instead of circulating in healthy action through the land, it stagnates, it coagulates, it corrupts. The disease manifests itself in sullen discontent, in class warfare, in secret societies, in almost puerile paroxysms of hatred against England, in a perpetual vacillation on all points but one—antipathy to the existing system. Sometimes we have a eulogy of the Sepoys, sometimes an enthusiastic movement in favour of the government of the Pope. At one time doctrines are urged concerning the tenure of land which can only be justified on the principle of Prudhon, that “property is robbery;” at another, the sympathies of the people are directed towards Austria, the political representative of the Middle Ages. Admiration for Italian revolutionists is stigmatised as grossly irreligious, yet agrarian murders are not unfrequently extenuated till they are almost justified.* The mass of the people seem to have no intelligible principles and no settled sympathies. Two-thirds of the population—the portion that is most distinctively and characteristically Irish—the classes who form the foundation of the political system, and who must ever rise in wealth and importance, seem to follow implicitly the guidance of the priests, and,

* Let any one who thinks this an exaggeration, turn to the articles in the ‘Nation,’ upon the attempted murder of Mr. Nixon, in the county of Donegal, a year or two ago.

like them, to be thoroughly alienated from England. Those who examine the popular press, or who attend the popular meetings* in Ireland, will easily appreciate the extent of this antipathy. During the few years that followed the famine it was supposed to have passed away, but the Russian war, the Indian rebellion, and the Italian question dispelled the illusion; and the journals that once dilated most eloquently on the tranquillity of Ireland have since confessed that the people are at heart as discontented as ever.

Grattan, in one of his speeches against the Union, described by implication the effect of destroying the Parliament, in language which has almost the weight of prophecy. "The object of the minister," he said, "seems to be to get rid of the Parliament in order to get rid of the opposition—a shallow and a senseless thought! What!

* We remember once hearing a lecture upon India, delivered in Dublin, by one of the most popular of the Irish priests, before an immense audience—chiefly, we should say, of the middle classes. In the course of his observations, the lecturer expressed his opinion, that England would sooner or later lose India. The prophecy, one would fancy, was not very startling, or very novel, and it was delivered in a simple conversational tone, without any of those rhetorical artifices that are employed to excite enthusiasm. It was responded to by a burst of the most impassioned and unanimous applause, and it was some time before the lecturer could resume. We believe that those who attend popular meetings in Ireland will recognise this as a fair specimen of the prevailing feeling. These things are not trivial, for they indicate an intense and a deep-rooted aversion to England.

when you banish the Parliament, do you banish the people? Do you extinguish the sentiment? Do you extinguish the soul? Do you put out the spirit of liberty when you destroy that organ, constitutional and spacious, through which the spirit may be safely and discreetly conveyed? What is the excellence of our constitution? Not that it performs prodigies and prevents the birth of vices that are inherent to human nature, but that it provides an organ in which those vices may play and evaporate, and through which the humours of society may pass without preying on the vitals. Parliament is that body, where the whole intellect of the country may be collected, and where the spirit of patriotism, of liberty, and of ambition, may all act under the control of that intellect and under the check of publicity and observation."

The gravity of the facts we have mentioned is sufficiently evident, yet, if these were all, the evil would most probably be but temporary—a discontent which was purely retrospective would hardly prove permanent. Ill feeling would grow fainter every year, as the memory of the past faded from the minds of the people, and the existence of a free press necessitating *some* public opinion would gradually identify the public mind with that of England. Unfortunately, however, there exists in Ireland a topic that effectually prevents discontent from languishing, or the sentiments of the two nations from coalescing. Sectarian animosity

has completely taken the place of purely political feeling, and paralyses all the energies of the people. This is indeed the master-curse of Ireland—the canker that corrodes all that is noble and patriotic in the country, and, we maintain, the direct and inevitable consequence of the Union. Much has been said of the terrific force with which it would rage were the Irish Parliament restored. We maintain, on the other hand, that no truth is more clearly stamped upon the page of history, and more distinctly deducible from the constitution of the human mind, than that a national feeling is the only effectual check to sectarian passions. Nothing can be more clear than that the logical consequences of many of the doctrines of the Church of Rome would be fatal to an independent and patriotic policy in any land—nothing is more clear than that in every land, where a healthy national feeling exists, Roman Catholic politicians are both independent and patriotic.

But, putting this case for a moment aside, consider that of an evangelical Protestant. If the power of government be placed in the hands of a man who has a vivid, realizing, and ever-present conviction that every idolater who dies in his belief is doomed to a future of wretchedness, compared with which the greatest earthly calamity is absolutely inappreciable; that the doctrinal differences between the members of a Church whose patronage he administers really

influence the eternal welfare of mankind ; that this visible world, with all its pomp and power, with all its intellectual and political greatness, is but as a gilded cloud floating across the unchanging soul, and that the political advantages of the acquisition of an empire would be dearly purchased by the death of a single soldier who died unrepentant, and who would have repented had he lived ;—we ask any candid man to consider what sort of a governor such a person would prove himself. Is it not self-evident that any one who was thoroughly penetrated with a belief in these doctrines, who habitually and systematically observed in his actions and his feelings the proportion of religious to temporal things which he recognises in his creed, would govern almost exclusively with a view to the former ? Possessing enormous power that might be employed in the service of his Church, he would sacrifice every other consideration—the dignity, the stability, the traditional alliances, the future greatness, of the nation—to this single object. His policy would dislocate the whole mechanism of government. It would at least place an insuperable barrier to the future prosperity of his country. And if men who believe these doctrines do not act in the manner we have described, the reason is very obvious. Just as in everyday life, the man who has persuaded himself of the nothingness of human things finds his conviction so diluted and

dimmed by other feelings that he takes an interest in common business, such as he could not take if he realized what he believed; so the politician finds the national and patriotic spirit that pervades the atmosphere in which he moves a sufficient corrective of his theological views. These latter give a tincture and bias to his political feeling, but they do not supplant it. They blend with it, and form an amalgam, not perhaps quite defensible in theory but exceedingly excellent in practice. The nation which is actuated by the same mixed motives always selects for power men who are thus moderate and unimpassioned in their views, and it is deeply sensible of the fact that no greater political calamity can befall a land than to be governed by religious enthusiasts.

Now the application of what we have said to the case of the Irish Roman Catholics is evident. The Roman Catholic doctrines concerning the nature of heresy, the duty of combating it, and the authority of the Pope in every land can be easily shown to be in many conceivable cases incompatible with a patriotic discharge of the duties of a representative, especially in a Protestant country. The opponents of emancipation dilated continually on this fact, and they argued that the Roman Catholic members would never assimilate with the Protestants, that they would never really seek the welfare of the country, that they would remain an isolated and, in some respects, a hostile

body, drawing their real inspiration from the Vatican. The advocates of the measure replied by pointing to the numerous instances in which Roman Catholic politicians in other countries discharged their duties as patriots, in defiance of the exertions of the priests and of the wishes of the Pope. With scarcely any exception, the greatest men of both countries adopted the views of the supporters of the measure, yet we suppose most persons will now admit that the predictions of Dr. Duigenan have been more fully verified than those of Grattan or of Plunket. I do not mean to imply that Emancipation should not have been accorded in 1829. To pass over many other reasons, it seems plain that it could not have been for ever withheld, and the longer it was delayed the greater was the ill feeling created by the contest. But at the same time most persons, we think, will allow that the predicted assimilation of the Roman Catholic with the Protestant members has not taken place, that the sectarian feelings of the former have not been neutralized or materially modified by other sentiments, and that their chief interests are attached to Rome and to the priests. The explanation of this fact seems to be that the tenets we have adverted to have these dangerous tendencies when their force is undiluted and unimpaired. In most countries a purely political and patriotic feeling exists to counteract them—in Ireland it does not exist.

The people of Ireland do not sympathise in the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament, and they have no national legislature to foster and to reflect the national sentiment. If purely political feeling be eliminated from a people who possess a representative system, and who are separated by rival creeds, the result is inevitable. The people and their representatives will be divided into those who are actuated by personal and those who are actuated by sectarian motives. We greatly doubt whether any conceivable alteration of religious endowments or of the other semi-religious matters so much complained of would effectually check the sectarian character of Irish politics. The evil has a deeper source, and must be met by a deeper remedy.

If the characteristic mark of a healthy Christianity be to unite its members by a bond of fraternity and love, there is no country in the world in which Christianity has more completely failed than in Ireland, and the failure is distinctly and directly attributable to the exertions of the clergy. With the religious aspect of this subject we have now no concern, but its political importance is of the most overwhelming and appalling magnitude.

It is a lamentable but, we fear, an undoubted fact that if the whole people of Ireland were converted to Mohammedanism nine-tenths of the present obstacles to the prosperity of the country

would be removed. The great evil that meets us on every side, that palsies every political effort, and dwarfs the growth of every secular movement, is—that the repulsion of sectarianism is stronger than the attraction of patriotism. The nation is divided into two classes, who are engaged in virulent, unceasing, and uncompromising strife. Differences of race, that would otherwise have long since been effaced, are stereotyped by being associated with differences of belief. Rancour, that would naturally have passed into the domain of history, exhibits a perpetual and undiminished energy; for of all methods of making hatred permanent and virulent, perhaps the most effectual is to infuse a little theology into it. The representatives of the Protestants scarcely disguise their anti-national feelings. They have cut themselves off from all the traditions of Swift, of Grattan, and of Curran. They have adopted a system of theology the most extreme, the most aggressive, and the most unattractive. They have made opposition to the Roman Catholics the grand object of their policy, and denunciation of the Maynooth Grant (which they stigmatise as sinful) the most prominent exhibition of that policy. There is scarcely an article that appears in 'The Times' newspaper, ridiculing Ireland and the Irish, that is not reproduced with applause by a large section of the Protestant journals.

It is an observation of Burke's that "when the

clergy say their Church is in danger they speak broad, and mean that their emoluments are in danger;" and perhaps upon this principle the policy of the Protestant clergy may be considered advantageous to Protestantism in Ireland. In every other respect there can be little question that it is not merely detrimental—that it is absolutely ruinous to it. Religion is the empire of the sympathies, and a Church that is in habitual opposition to the sympathies, the wishes, and the hopes of the mass of the people—a Church which is identified in their minds only with a recollection of bygone persecutions and of the defeat of a great popular movement—a Church which has cast aside its nationality, and associated itself with all that is unpatriotic, will never progress among the people. Persecution has sometimes caused such a Church to triumph; by argument and eloquence it never can. The experience of three hundred years has sufficiently demonstrated the fallacy of the old theory of the "expansive character" of Protestantism, and of the irresistible force of truth. Simple, unmixed reasoning never converts a people. When the taint of selfishness is on a preacher, his arguments are as empty wind. It would be impossible to conceive a more invidious position than that which the Protestant Church now occupies in Ireland, in spite of the numerous and the immense advantages it possesses. Historically the Protestant can show that in the

time of her national independence Ireland was unconnected with Rome—that it was England that introduced and fostered the Roman Church in Ireland ; that most of those illustrious men whose eloquence furnishes even now the precepts and the expositions of patriotism were Protestants and were Liberals ; and that even when the Protestants as a body were opposed to the national cause there were never wanting men of intellect and of energy who left the ranks to join it, and who not unfrequently proved that “the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim is better than the vintage of Abiezer.” He can show that the landlords, who are chiefly Protestants, are obviously the natural leaders of the people. He can prove that Protestantism is eminently adapted, from its character, to coalesce with every form of Liberalism ; that “the Reformation was the dawn of the government of public opinion ;”* that every subsequent step towards the emancipation of mankind may be distinctly traced to its influence ; and that the Church of Rome has associated herself indissolubly with the despotic theory of government. When Gregory poured forth insults on the brave Poles who were struggling to disenthral their crushed and dismembered land—when in his condemnation of Lamennais he authoritatively and in detail denounced the principles on which modern Liberalism rests, he but confirmed the antagonism which

* Mills.

the French Revolution had begun—an antagonism of which the Church is now reaping the fruit, not only in the destruction of the temporal power of the Pope, but in the alienation of the sympathies of a vast section of its members.*

Yet notwithstanding all these advantages—notwithstanding the zeal, the piety, and the learning to be found among the Protestant clergy—notwithstanding the eloquence which they exhibit to a greater extent than any other class of their fellow-countrymen, the Protestant Church seems doomed to a hopeless unpopularity in Ireland. Its position is so obviously a false one—its estrangement from the people is so patent—that mere arguments avail little in its behalf. Its opposition to the national cause reacts fatally upon itself. The Church that has sold the birthright will never receive the blessing.

Of the political attitude of the Roman Catholic priests it is not necessary to say much. No generous mind can withhold a tribute of admiration from the fidelity, the zeal, and the disinterestedness they have manifested as religious teachers under obstacles of almost unparalleled magnitude. No sincere Liberal can deny that their political leadership has been ruinous to na-

* We have a new and very striking illustration of this antagonism in the allocation in which the present Pope recently denounced "modern civilization"—the admission of persons of various creeds to public offices.

tionality in Ireland. Since the death of O'Connell their continual object has been to make the political strength of their country a weapon in the service of the Vatican. They have exerted their whole influence to prevent that harmony and assimilation of classes which is the only hope of their country. They have laboured most constantly and most effectively to widen every breach, to increase every cause of division, and to prevent in every way in their power the Roman Catholics from mingling with the Protestants. No one, we think, can deny this who has followed their policy on the educational question, who has observed the tone of their organs in the press, or who has perused those dreary semi-political pastorals which their prelates are continually publishing, as if to illustrate the wisdom of the saying of an early Father, "the more a bishop keeps silence, the more let him be respected." But they have gone further than this. The very essence of the policy of O'Connell and of his predecessors was, that the public opinion of a nation should determine its form of government. Of this principle—the only principle upon which the policy of O'Connell was defensible—the Irish Roman Catholics, guided by their priests, are now the bitterest opponents. They have come forward more prominently than any other people as the supporters of the Papal Government at a time when that Government is maintained only by foreign power, and when it has avowedly

identified itself with the cause of despotism in Italy.* They have in their hostility to this principle in a great measure abandoned the Liberal party, to which they owe almost every privilege they possess, to identify themselves with the party which has been the unwavering opponent of all religious equality. In other words, they have connected themselves with those who, according to their own principles, have ever been the curse of Ireland, in hopes of thus making themselves the curse of Italy. The only two possible solutions of the present discontents of Ireland are the complete fusion of the people of Ireland with the people of England, or else the creation of a healthy national feeling in Ireland, uniting its various classes, and giving a definite character to its policy. Since the death of O'Connell the Roman Catholic priests have been an insuperable obstacle to either solution.

* We would lay special stress upon the fact that the Papal Government makes itself the representative of the old principles of government, because there is another ground on which it might be consistently defended, even by Liberals. It might be argued that the temporal power was essential to the welfare of the Catholic Church—that the interests of religion were higher than those of liberty, and that, therefore, in case of collision, a liberal Catholic might consistently prefer the former. This, however, is not the ground adopted. The Pope has placed the question upon another issue. He has made his cause one with that of the old dynasty in Naples—with that of despotism against revolution.

Among the Roman Catholics the priests seem almost omnipotent. Among the Protestants, though the clergy do not exercise by any means the same sway, they have nevertheless succeeded in giving a completely sectarian character to politics. The Protestant press is thoroughly sectarian in its tone. The great questions on the hustings are semi-religious,—the Maynooth Grant, the Educational system, the proportion of Protestants and Roman Catholics appointed to office by the Government.

It is thus that Ireland, being deprived of that legislature which has hitherto proved the only effectual organ of national feeling, has come completely under the influence of sectarian passions: class against class, creed against creed, nation against nation; a spectacle of perpetual disunion, of virulent and unabating rancour. All the various elements of dissension of the present and of the past are flung into the alembic of sectarianism, and there fused and blended into an intense, a relentless, and, as it would seem, an increasing hatred. During the lifetime of O'Connell there was a kind of reversionary loyalty among the people. They looked forward to the restoration of the Irish Parliament as the termination of all agitation. Their leader endeavoured earnestly to conciliate the different sections of the people. He placed patriotism before sectarianism, and adopted intelligible principles of policy. While

he held the reins of power we should never have heard a eulogy of the Sepoys, or seen the people identifying themselves with foreign despotism ; but since he has passed away national feeling seems to have almost perished in the land, and sectarianism to have become more unmitigated and undiluted than in any former period. With the exception of the upper orders, who are in every country somewhat cosmopolitan in their sympathies, and who always readily adapt themselves to any political arrangement, the alienation of the people from English politics seems as absolute and as fixed as ever.

There is something inexpressibly melancholy in such a condition. Political decline, whatever may be the symptom it manifests, must ever be a touching sight to men of feeling and sensibility. Few such persons could gaze unmoved upon the gorgeous palaces of Venice, as they lie mouldering in their loveliness upon the wave, or could contemplate without a feeling of irrepressible awe the subversion of that Papal throne which is shadowed by the glories of so many centuries. Yet there is a spectacle more deeply mournful than the destruction of any city, however lovely, or any throne, however ancient. It is the perversion of a nation's character, it is the paralysis of a nation's energies, it is the corruption and decay that ensue when the spirit of patriotism is extinguished, and when sectarianism and fana-

ticism rage unchecked. The lamp of genius burns low, the pulse of life beats with an ever fainter throb; the nation, in spite of natural advantages and material prosperity, becomes but a cipher and a laughing-stock in the world.

We have spoken of the evil effect of this state of things upon the Irish character. Its evil effects upon England, if not so serious, are nevertheless very real.

In the first place it implies a great loss of character. One of the most conspicuous of living English statesmen has again and again declared, in language as explicit as any that can be conceived, that every nation has a right to a form of government in accordance with its will, and should alone judge what is expedient for itself. This doctrine has been continually applauded by Parliament. It has been accepted by almost the whole of the British press. It has been represented as a complete justification of recent events in Italy. The universal suffrage by which the sentiments of the people of that country have been determined has been the subject of almost unmingled eulogy, yet the present form of government in Ireland is retained in distinct defiance of the principle so emphatically enunciated. It was imposed in 1800 contrary to the wish of the people, and notwithstanding the exertions of all the intellect of the land. It was reaffirmed when the mass of the people, guided by the two greatest

Irish politicians of the century, were denouncing it. It is retained to the present day, though the amount of discontent, if tested only by universal suffrage, would probably be found to be as great as exists in the Papal States, notwithstanding the contagion of surrounding revolution. We do not deny that these facts may be in some degree attenuated, but that they are directly inconsistent with the liberal professions of England is a position so self-evident that no special-pleading can evade it. The condition of Ireland and of the Ionian Islands may attract little notice in England, for they are subjects on which the British press is usually remarkably silent; but they are constant topics in every foreign newspaper that is hostile to England. It is inconsistencies of this kind that make foreigners regard England as the Pharisee of nations, enunciating high principles for others which she never thinks of applying to herself. Perhaps no great nation ranks so high in the moral scale if measured only by her acts. Perhaps no great nation ranks so low if measured by the relation of her acts to her professions.

Another important consideration is the influence of Irish emigration upon the public opinion of America and of the colonies. "Nations," as Grattan once finely said, "have neither a parent's nor a child's affection. Like the eagle, they throw off their young and know them no longer;" but though they cannot reckon upon

the tie of gratitude and affection, they can usually count to a considerable extent on that of community of race, of language, and of sentiment. No nation can afford to despise the opinion of its neighbours; and the maintenance of the "empire of ideas" is almost as important as the preservation of the territory actually subject to the sovereign. The two nations that do most to spread their influence beyond their borders are the French and the English. The former owes its success chiefly to the character of its literature, the fascination of its manners, and the spirit of political proselytism that characterises it; the latter, to the genius of colonization that it possesses to a greater degree than any other nation. Yet everywhere, side by side with the extension of English influence, the Nemesis of Ireland appears. The Irish people, so inexhaustibly prolific, scatter themselves through every land, and leaven every political assembly. Their spirit of enterprise, their versatility, their popular manners, have everywhere made them prominent, and have given them an influence of the most formidable character. In Australia we have seen a Ministry presided over by an Irishman, and reckoning among its leading members the former editor of 'The Nation.' In America Irishmen occupy a foremost place in almost every department; and their political importance is so great that an American party was formed in the vain hope of

counteracting it. Everywhere they bring with them their separate religion, and that extraordinary tenacity of old opinions for which they are so remarkable. Everywhere they labour with unwearied and most fruitful zeal to kindle a feeling of hostility against England.

Nor should we omit from our calculations the possibility of future rebellion in Ireland. There is a tendency in nations that are guided chiefly by a daily press to overlook such distant eventualities, and to concentrate attention exclusively on the present. In time of prosperity and peace the existence of a deep-seated discontent in Ireland may not seriously affect the interests of England, but who can fail to perceive how difficult it might be if calamity was goading that discontent into desperation, and an invading army directing and sustaining it? In the present day, when the conditions of warfare are so entirely altered—when there are so many great Powers in the world, and when military operations are conducted with such startling rapidity, the supremacy of a great nation rests on the most precarious basis. There was a time when the naval strength of England enabled her to defy the entire world, but that time has passed for ever. A coalition of great powers—a single unsuccessful battle—a scientific discovery monopolised by her opponents, might destroy her empire of the seas, and leave her coasts open to invasion. If this were to occur it would not be

forgotten that the greatest military genius the world has ever known, when reviewing his career at St. Helena, declared that the capital mistake of his life had been the omission of an expedition to Ireland. That rebellion would be disastrous to Ireland if unsuccessful, and still more disastrous if triumphant—that it would imply civil war of the worst character, and private suffering to an almost incalculable extent—may be readily admitted. But, if calamitous to Ireland, there can be no doubt that it would be also most calamitous to England. These things may one day come to pass, for every year shows more clearly that the goal to which Europe is tending, is the universal recognition of the rights of nationalities.

Another and a more pressing danger arises from the position of the Irish members in Parliament. The British constitution, though in some respects exceedingly strong, is, in other respects, one of the most fragile in the world. It remains unshaken amid storms of public opinion that would shatter any other Government; but it is essential to its very existence that all its component parts should be pervaded by a strong spirit of patriotism. It is so complex in its character, and represents so many opposing interests, that if it were not for the perpetual sacrifice of party and provincial feelings to patriotism, and for the spirit of mutual forbearance displayed by all shades of politicians, it would long since have perished. Under these circum-



stances the presence in Parliament of a body of men acting together, and inspired by a different feeling from attachment to the empire must always be a danger, and more especially at present. The disintegration of parties in England seems tending dangerously towards a Government by clap-trap. There are so many small sections of politicians, and so many independent members, that the most transient unpopularity, the slightest deviation from the opinions of the hour, may produce a combination that would destroy the strongest Ministry. Hence a perpetual weakness of Government, and an antipathy to any line of consistent and profound policy. An Irish party, skilfully guided, and availing itself of this state of things, might now turn the balance of power. Nor is the evil likely to stop here. If we put aside occasional periods of political lassitude, or of conservative reaction, and consider the general tendency of politics, it will scarcely, we suppose, be denied, that it is towards the ascendancy of democracy. If we put aside those exceptional circumstances under which the Irish priests coalesce with the Conservatives on questions of foreign policy, it will scarcely be denied that the political influence of Ireland weighs strongly and unmistakeably in the democratical scale. A poor and populous country is indeed naturally democratic. Should another great step be taken in the democratical direction, two results may be confi-

dently predicted. In the first place, the Italian party would be greatly strengthened, for the power of the priests is strongest in the lower strata of society. In the second place, the evil of such a party would be far greater than it is now, for the dangers of collision between the different sections of the constitution would be much increased. The best reason for intrusting political power chiefly to the upper orders, in a constitution like that of England, is not because they are better educated, or more thoroughly patriotic than others, or because they have a greater stake in the country, or pay a larger proportion of the taxation,—but because they, of all classes, are most skilled in compromise. The refinements of good society, which mould and form their entire natures, are all but an education in compromises. They teach how to conceal disagreeable thoughts—how to yield with grace—how to avoid every jar, and control every passion—how to acquire a pliant and acquiescent manner. The lower classes feel more intensely in political matters—they express their feelings more emphatically—they pursue their course with a more absorbing vehemence. A democratical assembly may govern with energy and wisdom, but it is scarcely possible that it can continue to govern in harmony with another assembly of a different shade of polities. Should further reforms render the House of Commons thoroughly democratical in feeling, the present

constitution of England would, doubtless, be much endangered, and the evil of a party whose primary wishes are not attached to the interests of the empire proportionately increased.*

And, under any circumstances, dissension between two nations that are so nearly associated must be in itself an evil. Seven hundred years, if they have multiplied causes of dissension, have also multiplied ties of connection. The two nations seem naturally designed for each other, and each without the other is imperfect. Each possesses many of the attributes of greatness, but each is deficient in some qualities for which the other is distinguished. In both nations we find an almost perfect courage and an almost boundless spirit of enterprise; but Englishmen exhibit that steady perseverance, that uniform ascendancy of reason over passion, which we so seldom find in Ireland; while Irishmen possess the popularity of manners and the versatility of disposition in which Englishmen are lamentably deficient. Ireland, if contented, would be the complement of England; while hostile, it continues a constant source of danger.

Is this state of things likely to continue? We

* Another striking tendency of parliamentary government in England is to decline in its efficiency on account of the overwhelming and ever increasing amount of business to be discharged. The evil is likely to be a growing one, and it seems as though, sooner or later, some measure must be adopted to remove a considerable portion of this business from the jurisdiction of the parliament at Westminster.

confess we are not as sanguine as some persons seem to be about the effect of time in assimilating the character of the two nations and banishing the existing animosity. The discontent in Ireland differs, we think, in kind from that of the twenty years preceding the Union. Then it arose from the imperfections of the national organ of public opinion, now it arises from the want of any such organ; then it diminished every year, while at present political feeling seems to fade more and more into sectarianism. The evil at present is not a torpor of the public mind, but a substitution of a semi-religious for a purely political public opinion. We see few symptoms of this evil abating. The Government, indeed, labours with evident earnestness and considerable success to steer evenly between the two creeds, but the super-abundant theological energies of the English people are constantly welling over upon Ireland. England is consequently but a synonym for Protestantism with the people, and is therefore the object of an undiminishing sectarian antipathy. The very attachment of a large section of the Irish Protestants to England is sufficient to repel the Roman Catholics, for that attachment is more sectarian than political. It is as the Bible-loving land, the bulwark of Protestantism, the terror of Popery. The Established Church serves also to foster the sectarian spirit, which, under all these circumstances, possesses an astonishing vita-

lity. It has been observed, too, that the Roman Catholic system being essentially traditional, has a tendency to petrify and to preserve all traditional feelings. We sometimes find Roman Catholic nations changing greatly, but it is generally when their Church has lost its hold upon their characters. The difference between the two religions is much more than a difference of doctrines. The Roman Catholic system forms a type of character wholly different from that of the Protestants, with different virtues and vices, with different modes of thought and feeling. There is so little affinity between the two types, that the Roman Catholics can go on year by year within their own sphere, thinking, acting, writing, speaking, and progressing without being in any very great degree affected by Protestant thought, without losing their distinctive tendencies or sentiments. Much has been said of the effect of the spread of education in destroying sectarianism. A system of education that would attack the religious policy of the Roman Catholics would be, of course, absolutely out of the question ; and, in a country like Ireland, where the people are intensely religious in their feelings, we believe the education of the priest must ever prove stronger than the education of the schoolmaster. Nor should we forget that there seems at present a strong probability of national education becoming separate, and consequently thoroughly sectarian. While the bulk of the clergy

of both religions denounce the only system of mixed education that appears practicable, it becomes a grave question how long such a system can be maintained.

One thing, however, seems certain — that no system of education that directs the attention of the people to the history of their own land can fail to quicken the national feeling among them. The great obstacle to every liberal party in Ireland, has been the prevailing ignorance of Irish history. The great engine by which the Repeal movement progressed was the diffusion of historical treatises and of the speeches of the leading orators of the past. There are, perhaps, few better means of conjecturing the future of a nation, than to examine in what direction its enthusiasm is likely to act. In Ireland there can scarcely be a question upon the subject. Ever since the dawn of public opinion, there has been a party which has maintained that the goal to which Irish patriots should tend, is the recognition of their country as a distinct and independent nationality, connected with England by the Crown; that in such a condition alone it could retain a healthy political life, and could act in cordial co-operation with England; that every other system would be transient in its duration, and humiliating and disastrous while it lasted. To this party all the genius of Ireland has ever belonged. It is scarcely possible to cite two Irish politicians of real eminence who have not,

more or less, assisted it. Swift and Molyneux originated the conception; Burke aided it when he wrote in approval of the movement of '82, and denounced the penal-laws, and the trade restrictions that shackled the energies of Ireland; Sheridan, when he exerted all his eloquence to oppose the Union; Flood, when he formed the national party in Parliament; Grattan, when he led that party in its triumph and in its fall. The enthusiasm which springs from the memory of the past will ever sustain it; the patriotic passion, which makes the independence of the land its primary object, will foster and inspire it. This passion is too deeply imbedded in human nature to be eradicated by any material considerations. Like the domestic affection, it is one of the first instincts of humanity. As long as the nation retains its distinct character and its history, the enthusiasts of the land will ever struggle against a form of government which was tyrannically imposed, and which has destroyed the national feeling among the people. Statesmen may regard that enthusiasm as irrational, but they must acknowledge its existence as a fact. He who eliminates from his calculations the opinions of fools, proves that he is himself worthy of being enrolled under that denomination.

Another important element of dissension is the tone habitually adopted by English writers towards Ireland. Reasoning *& priori* we might have ima-

gined that common decency would have rendered that tone guarded and conciliatory ; for, if England has sometimes had cause to complain of Ireland, Ireland has had incomparably more cause to complain of England. For seven hundred years England has ruled over a nation which has exhibited more than average intellect at home and far more than average success abroad—a nation which, though its faults are doubtless many and serious, is certainly neither unamiable, ungrateful, nor intractable—and she has left it one of the most discontented and degraded in Europe. She has ruled over a country which seemed designed by Providence to be one of the most flourishing in the world : indented with the noblest harbours—placed between two continents as if to reap the advantages of both—possessing a temperate and salubrious climate and a soil of more than common fertility—and she has left it one of the poorest, one of the most wretched upon the earth. A fatal blast seems to rest upon it and to counteract all the advantages of Nature. The most superficial traveller is struck with the anomaly. His first inquiry is, what tyranny has so thwarted the designs of Providence ? He finds that, according to the confessions of English writers for the six hundred and fifty years that elapsed between the conquest and the emancipation of the Catholics, the English government of Ireland was one long series of oppressions—that massacres and banish-

ments, 'confiscations and disqualifications, compulsory ignorance and trade restrictions, were all resorted to ; that the industry of the country was so paralyzed that it has never recovered its elasticity; that the various classes of the people were so divided that they have never regained their unity; that the character of the nation was so formed and moulded in the die of sorrow, that almost every prominent vice engrained in the national character may be distinctly traced to the influences of bygone tyranny; and that, when the age of disqualifications had passed, a legislative system was still retained in defiance of the wish of the people, by the nation which proclaims itself the most emphatic asserter of the rights of nationalities.

Such is the past of English government of Ireland—a tissue of brutality and hypocrisy scarcely surpassed in history. Who would not have imagined that in a more enlightened age the tone of the British press towards Ireland would have been at least moderate, friendly, and conciliatory? Let any candid man judge whether it is so. Let him observe the prominence given to every crime that is committed in Ireland, to every absurdity that can be culled from the Irish press, to every failure of an Irish movement. Let him observe the ceaseless ridicule, the unwavering contempt, the studied depreciation of the Irish character and intellect habitual in the English newspapers. Let him observe their persistent refusal to regard Irish

affairs in any light but the ridiculous, and then answer the question for himself. We believe impartial Englishmen will scarcely deny what foreign observers unanimously declare, that the object of the most influential section of the English press is to discredit the Irish intellect and the Irish character before England and before Europe. "The tone of the British press towards Ireland," said a writer in the '*Révue des Deux Mondes*,' when urging the Irish people to give up the dream of nationality, "is detestable." "It would be about as reasonable," remarked a recent German tourist, "to judge of the Irish character from English writers as to take an Austrian estimate of Italian affairs." As long as this tone continues, the two nations never can amalgamate, or assimilate, or cordially co-operate. A war of recriminations is an evil, but it is a greater evil for a nation tranquilly to suffer its character to be frittered away by calumny veiled in sarcasm and by a contemptuous suppression of all facts but those which tell against itself. As long as Englishmen adopt a tone of habitual depreciation in speaking of the present of Ireland, Irishmen would betray their country were they to suffer the curtain to fall upon its past.

In considering the future of public opinion in Ireland, there is one measure which may some day be carried into effect that would probably have a very great influence, though in what direc-

tion it is exceedingly difficult to determine — I mean the disendowment of the Established Church. I waive altogether the discussion of the justice of such a measure, and confine myself to the results that might follow it. There is scarcely any Irish question more perplexing, or on which authorities are more divided. Plunket predicted that the destruction of the Establishment would be the deathblow of the connection; Macaulay, that it would be the only effectual means of pacifying Ireland. If we regard the question in the light of the past, it seems evident that the Establishment has hitherto been the strongest bulwark of the Union. O'Connell could scarcely have failed if the bulk of the Protestants had not held aloof from him. A very large section at least of those Protestants opposed him simply through love of the Establishment, which they argued could not continue to exist under an Irish Parliament. To the present day we believe that a considerable proportion of the Protestants are attached to the Union on this ground alone. Whether in the event of a disendowment of the Establishment their alienation would be compensated for by any permanent attachment of the Roman Catholics, is a matter of opinion on which it is impossible to pronounce with any certainty.

While, however, I regard the pictures drawn by some writers of the future content of Ireland as absurdly overcharged, I am far from wishing to

paint the prospects of the country in colours of unmixed gloom. I do not believe that mere material prosperity or the increase of education will necessarily reclaim public opinion, but I do not overlook the fact that the general tone of thought and feeling in England and on the Continent must modify it greatly. One of the most prominent characteristics of the spirit of the age is its tendency to disassociate politics from religion, and to diminish the extraordinary stress once laid upon dogmatic theology. A strong party spirit is the best index expurgatorius, and the new principles penetrate but slowly amid the fierce passions that still convulse the Irish people; but penetrate, I doubt not, they will. The habitual sacrifice of the spirit of Christianity to sectarian dogmas is now happily an anachronism, and there are very few countries in the world in which it would be possible. The liberality of sentiment pervading the literature of the century will sooner or later do its work, and should any man of transcendent intellect arise in Ireland, he will find that the public mind has been gradually preparing to receive him. There is, perhaps, no country in the world that would respond to the touch of genius so readily as Ireland in the present day. All the elements of a great movement exist among the people—a restless, nervous consciousness of the evil of their present condition, a deep disgust at the cant and

the imbecility that are dominant, a keen and intense perception of the charm of genius. Irishmen sometimes forget their great men when they are dead, but they never fail to recognise them when they are living. That acute sense of the power of intellect, and especially of eloquence, which sectarianism has never been able to destroy, which has again and again caused assemblies of the most violent Roman Catholics to hang with breathless admiration on the lips of the most violent Orangeman, is, we think, the most encouraging symptom of recovery. Should a political leader arise whose character was above suspicion, and whose intellect was above cavil, who was neither a lawyer nor a lay preacher, who could read the signs of the times, and make his eloquence a power in Europe, his influence with the people would be unbounded. The selfishness, and bigotry, and imbecility, that have so long reigned, would make the resplendency of his genius but the more conspicuous; the waves of sectarian strife would sink to silence at his voice; the aspirations and the patriotism of Ireland would recognize him as the prophet of the future.

We look forward with unshaken confidence to the advent of such a leader. The mantle of Grattan is not destined to be for ever unclaimed. The soil of Ireland has ever proved fertile in genius, and in no other country in Europe has genius so uniformly taken the direction of politics. In the

mean time the task of Irish writers is a simple, if not a very hopeful, one. It is to defend the character of the nation, aspersed and ridiculed as it is by the writers of England, and still more injured by the vulgarity, the inconsistencies, and the virulence of a large section of those of Ireland. It is to endeavour to lead back public opinion to those liberal and progressive principles from which, under priestly guidance, it has so lamentably aberrated. It is, above all, to labour with unwearied zeal to allay that theological fever which is raging through the land; to pursue this work courageously and unflinchingly amid unpopularity and clamour and reproach; “to sit by the sick bed of their delirious country, and for the love they bear that honoured name to endure all the insults and all the rebuffs they receive from their frantic mother.”* A thankless but not an ignoble task! The Irishman who makes a friend of a fellow-countryman of a different religion from his own is a benefactor to Ireland. As long as the frenzy of sectarianism continues; as long as blind hatred is the actuating principle of the people; Ireland never can rise to a position of dignity or prosperity. She never can act in harmony with other sections of the empire; she never can find content at home or become respected and honoured abroad. Her power would be at once an evil to herself and to

* Burke.

England. Her independence would be the dismemberment of the empire. The greatest of all our wants is a lay public opinion. When a healthy national feeling shall have been produced, uniting the different sections of the people by the bond of patriotism and shattering the political ascendency of the clergy, the prosperity of Ireland will have been secured. Whether the public mind may then tend to the ideal of Grattan or the ideal of Pitt, to a distinct Parliament or to a complete fusion with England, I do not venture to predict; but I doubt not that, in whatever direction it may act, it will eventually triumph.

In our age, and under our Government, the coercion of a nation is only possible by its divisions; and next to the omnipotence of God is the will of a united people.

THE END.

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